

Miss

DRAWER 9

WHIG LEADER

71.2071 OBS. 040716



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

Abraham Lincoln's Political Career Through 1860

Whigs

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE

July 24, 1848

Speech of Mr. H. W. Hilliard of
Alabama

(page 939 and 941)

The glory of our political system hitherto has been, that power was distributed, checked, guarded; that the Legislative power was one thing, the Executive power another, and that of the Judiciary distinct from both these. But if the President is to be allowed to seize and exert one of the most important powers of Congress - no less a power than that of deciding the question of war or peace; and if, in the very body whose authority has been thus violated and contemned; if in this body, representing the people directly; this body, which ought forever to stand between Executive aggressions and popular rights; this body, which is to decide whether the country shall go to war or continue at peace; this body, without whose votes not a single tax can be laid, not a single dollar expended; if, I say, in this representative body, men are to rise up and sustain this usurpation of the President, then it will hardly be worth while long to go through the forms of legislation. We may take down the mace from beside your chair; we may leave these seats vacant, and, placing all the powers of the Government in the hands of one man, commit the prosperity, the liberties, and the glory of the country to his keeping.....there are great principles which are essential to liberty; it cannot exist without them. These the Whigs seek to preserve. The very first of these principles is resistance to Executive power. It is a singular fact that the party styling itself Democratic, seeks to clothe the President with almost royal attributes; it sustains him in all his assumptions of authority, in all his usurpations of power.

PROMINENT COUNTY MEN WERE WHIGS IN 1834

Minutes of Convention Held In This
City In June of That Year Found
In Old Frankfort Newspaper

By Historical Editor.

Springfield Star — 8-12-1937

There were Whigs in Washington County a century ago, and they were active too, in behalf of their idol, Henry Clay. This is evident from a reading of the minutes of a Public Meeting of the Whigs of Washington and Marion Counties, held at the Court-house in Springfield on June 23, 1834. These minutes were published in "The Commonwealth," a paper published at Frankfort, in the interest of the Whig cause in Kentucky.

Some of the outstanding citizens of Springfield and Washington County,

a century ago, were numbered among the members of the Whig party. The number of Whigs in the county, however, was slightly less than that of adherents to the Democratic or Jacksonian party. Old election returns show that with the exception of one or two times, the Democrats were always victorious, though usually by small majorities.

Numbered among the Whigs of Washington County, were such prominent Springfield lawyers as the Hon. Paul J. Booker, the Hon. John W. Cocke, and the Hon. William Hays; such doctors of the town and county as E. B. Gaither, R. C. Palmer, and John B. Smith; such merchants as Elias Davison and Hugh McElroy; and, such farmers as Major Edward Berry (the cousin of Nancy Hanks), Col. Wm. Kendrick, Edward Head, Richard P. Gregory, Stephen Thompson, and Lloyd Ray.

The meeting of the Whigs of Washington and Marion Counties was held for the purpose of electing delegates to attend the State Convention of the party to be held at Frankfort on July 4, 1834. The minutes of the meeting as reported by Dr. John B. Smith, Secretary, follow:

Public Meeting

Springfield, June 24, 1834.

Sir: Yesterday was our County Court day—after the business of the Court was over, the Whigs of Washington and Marion Counties held a meeting. After the meeting was called to order, and the object of it was stated, Elias Davison of Washington, and Walter Hamilton, Esq., of Marion, were called to the chair, and John B. Smith, appointed Secretary.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1. Resolved, That we cordially agree with our coadjutors, in the propriety of holding a Convention at Frankfort, on the Fourth day of July next, to be celebrated as recommended by them.

2. Resolved, That Mr. Hays, Mountford Peter, Hon. Paul J. Booker, Charles Creager, Mankin Champion, Mark Gilleham, William S. Davison, James Harris, Hon. Wm. L. Kelly, Daniel B. Hughes, Richard P. Gregory, Major Edward Berry, Col. Peter Brown, Elias Davison, Dr. E. B. Gaither, Dr. J. B. Smith, Dr. R. C. Palmer, Col. John C. Reilly, Stephen Thompson, Lloyd Ray, Frederick W. Trapnell, John W. Cocke, Stephen G. Letcher, Edward Champion, Jacob Froman, Henry Baker, James Bently, Col. Wm. Kendrick, Thomas Head, Capt. James Austin, John C. Moffett, Hugh McElroy, James H. Cunningham, G. W. Spratt, Col. Wm. M. Beall, John W. Bainbridge, John Henderson, George Clements, G. W. Gregory, John Funk, John Freeman, Mordecai Hardin, and Patrick Sansbury, of Washington county, and Benedict Spalding, John Shuck, James Phillips, Foster Ray, David Phillips, Nicholas Ray, sen., Dr. M. S. Shuck, Dr. James Fleece, James M. Sims, Nicholas Ray, jr., John Chandler, Ed. Penick, Henry Taylor, Esq., E. E. Haggard, Dr. B. Spalding, Daniel Everhart, Samuel Smith, Samuel T. Ray, Samuel Spalding, Mr. Tarqueton, Wm. Edmonson, R. H. Rountree, Samuel Vansickels, Felix B. Grundy, Wm. Shelby, G. W. Taylor, Walter Hamilton, Dr. John Lancaster, T. B. Harrison, Richard Spalding, Jesse T. Riser, Jos. Deyers, Esq., and Leonard

certainly was not walking in the footsteps of his celebrated uncle who was an ardent Democrat and strong supporter of Jacksonianism.

A little further on in the same issue of "The Commonwealth" from which the preceding was taken, we find an account of the meeting of the Whig Convention at the Capitol in Frankfort, on July 4, 1834. The convention was called to order by the Hon. Charles A. Wickliffe (a Washington County product). The roll of delegates shows that Munford Peters, William Gregory, John Henderson, Elias Davison, and J. Bain, attended from Washington county, and Richard Spalding, from Marion county.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 580

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

May 20, 1940

THE LONE WHIG FROM ILLINOIS

During the period in which Abraham Lincoln was coming into political prominence, he was affiliated with the Whigs. As a member of this party he was elected to Congress in 1846. He was the only successful Whig candidate from his state, and his associates soon dubbed him "The Lone Whig from Illinois."

Lincoln witnessed both the rise and fall of the Whigs. In his memorable debate with Douglas at Alton, he said, "I am somewhat acquainted with the old-line Whigs. I was with the old-line Whigs from the origin to the end of that party." On one other occasion he wrote with reference to his early political affiliations, "always a Whig in politics."

The Beau Ideal Statesman

There is no doubt but that Lincoln was led into the Whig party by Henry Clay and his political philosophy known as The American System. Clay was probably the first Presidential candidate whose name became familiar to Lincoln, as Clay made his first race for the Presidency in 1824 when Lincoln was fifteen years old. In a eulogy at the time of Clay's death, Lincoln said, "There has never been a moment since 1824 till after 1848 when a very large portion of the American people did not cling to him (Clay) with an enthusiastic hope and purpose of still elevating him to the Presidency."

These words of Lincoln which follow indicate his feeling toward the Whig's most persistent statesman: "Henry Clay, my beau ideal of a statesman, the man for whom I fought all my humble life." As early as 1832, when Lincoln was but twenty-three years of age, according to his own testimony he was an "avowed Clay man."

The Whig Junto

Lincoln as "an avowed Clay man" in the Presidential contest of 1832, the first one in which the new voter was eligible to participate, evolved along with his associates a new political alliance which became known as the Whig party. Lincoln might be called a charter member of the political unit, dubbed locally "The Whig Junto."

The American System promoted by Clay had as one of its most important objectives the protective tariff plank. In a letter which Lincoln wrote in 1860 he said, "In the days of Henry Clay I was a Henry Clay tariff man and my views have undergone no material change upon that subject."

The Harrison Elector

Lincoln's rapid rise among the Illinois Whigs caused him to be chosen a Presidential elector for Harrison, the Whig candidate in 1840. The first week in February Lincoln wrote a circular to be mailed to all the leading Whigs in the State. He was placed on the State Central Committee with A. G. Henry, R. F. Barrett, E. D. Baker, and J. F. Speed, and a campaign Whig newspaper called *The Old Soldier* was published by this group.

Lincoln's activity in the Harrison campaign is illustrated by a news item in *The Quincy Whig* which states, "Mr. Lincoln, one of the principle electors for the state is 'going it with a perfect rush' in some of the interior counties." He went beyond the "interior counties," extending his itinerary as far south as Shawneetown, Illinois, and even crossing the river into Kentucky where he made a speech at Morganfield.

Husband of An Ardent Whig

After Abraham Lincoln married Mary Todd on November 4, 1842, he lived in the very Lexington atmosphere of the Clays. Mary's father was one of Henry Clay's closest friends and political associates. As a child Mary was often in the home of the Clays and there was no one outside her own family whom she admired more sincerely than Mr. Clay.

Mary's father, Robert Todd, was one of the leading Whigs of Kentucky. He served as clerk of the House of Representatives in Kentucky for more than twenty years, and later was elected to the Senate. It is doubtful if Henry Clay had a more loyal supporter in Lexington, and Mr. Todd's position financially undoubtedly worked to Clay's advantage.

The Clay Elector

The 1844 election brought Clay again before the public as a candidate for the Presidency. Lincoln was made a Presidential elector and soon was busily engaged in advancing the interests of Clay. He even went beyond the boundaries of his own state in this campaign, visiting Indiana and making several speeches for Clay near the site of his old home in Spencer County.

During this same period in which Lincoln seemed to be the most active Clay champion in Illinois, his wife's father, Robert Todd, was campaigning for Clay in Kentucky. *The Lexington Observer* noted Robert Todd's activities on behalf of Clay and commented that Senator Todd's arguments "exceeded anything ever heard on the subject."

The Lone Whig

With four terms in the legislature behind him and two Presidential campaigns in which he had served the Whigs well, Lincoln had ambitions to become the Whig candidate for Congress in 1846 and in August he was elected. The importance of the great state which Lincoln was representing in Washington was impressed on hundreds of delegates from the east by the River and Harbor Convention in Chicago, Illinois. Horace Greeley of New York said it was "the largest meeting ever gathered in America and gave a new picture of the importance of the west." Most of the delegates were Whigs, and warm advocates of Clay's Internal Improvement program.

The Young Indians

Some time after Lincoln had taken his seat in Congress, he became a member of a group of young congressmen who called themselves the Young Indians. There were originally seven in this Whig group: Stephens and Toombs of Georgia; Preston, Flournoy and Pendleton of Virginia; Lincoln of Illinois and Smith of Connecticut.

This was largely a group of young men with southern interests. Lincoln himself having been born in the South, left only Smith as a representative of the North. The southern Whigs were enthusiastic about the candidacy of Zachary Taylor for the Presidency in 1848 and Lincoln joined in their enthusiasm. Stephenson claimed that the Young Indians organized the Taylor movement. The group, now greatly increased in numbers, sponsored a paper in Washington called *The Battery* which was fashioned after the paper published in Springfield by Lincoln and his associates, called *The Old Soldier*.

In the 1848 Whig convention the names of six of the most influential men in America were placed before the delegates for nomination to the Presidency: General Zachary Taylor, Henry Clay, John M. Clayton, General Winfield Scott, Judge John McLean, and Daniel Webster, yet four years later the party was sick unto death.

Phoenix-like

One has to pronounce but one slogan, "No extension of slavery," to account for the passing of the Whigs and the transfer of Lincoln's loyalty to the Republicans. The platform of the Whig party in its last campaign in 1852 clearly indicated it would not recognize the rapidly growing sentiment in the North against the enslavement of men. The Whigs boasted that "The Democratic platform in the year 1852 differed in no cardinal principle or essential point from the one adopted by the Whig Party." There was never any need of another Whig platform, and Lincoln, the old-line Whig, arose phoenix-like from the party's ashes.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 793

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

June 19, 1944

LINCOLN'S WHIG INHERITANCE

The fact that Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the presidency at a Republican convention in Chicago always adds special interest to the Lincoln student for other similar political gatherings held in the city. On the eve of the Republican Convention now about to assemble, it might be of interest to observe one or two factors which were inherited from a parent political group, and which influenced the thinking of Lincoln on certain political questions.

The Republicans in the beginning of this movement secured much of their strength for organization from the Whigs, and it is accepted generally that this group contributed most to the leadership of the new party. While the slavery question overshadowed all others under consideration, there were some basic doctrines of the Whigs which were bound to be felt in the deliberations of the newly organized group.

It appears as if Lincoln may have come by his personal political views through inheritance, as most people do. John Hanks once said, "Abe was always a Whig, so was his father before him." We are sure the first statement is true and we are inclined to believe that John Hanks was correct about the early political faith of Thomas Lincoln.

As late as 1858 Lincoln remarked, "I have always been an old-line Whig," and by further comment on another occasion, "I am somewhat acquainted with the old-line Whigs. I was with the old-line Whigs from the origin to the end of that party. I became well acquainted with them." In an autobiographical sketch prepared for Fell he stated, "always a Whig in politics."

When Abraham Lincoln was elected a Whig representative to Congress, he became affiliated with a group of young men who became known as "The Young Indians." The group consisted of Stephens and Tombs, of Georgia, Ballard Preston, Flournoy and Pendleton, of Virginia, Truman Smith, of Connecticut, and Lincoln, of Illinois. Stevens organized the group which was composed of seven young Whigs.

There is evidence in Lincoln's own writings and also in his recorded votes that he adhered strongly to the Whig doctrines. This led him to make a speech during the early part of the Thirtieth Congress on the Mexican War and his "spot" resolutions as they were dubbed were most certainly to the point.

The often criticized position which Lincoln took on the Mexican War was in harmony with the Whig attitude. From the very beginning of the Whig movement the party had advocated, "resistance to executive power." Accordingly, the Whigs generally and Lincoln in particular, felt the President had seized authorities not vested in his office and as stated by Lincoln, "The war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President."

On July 24, 1848, one of the spokesmen of the Whigs from the far South, H. W. Hilliard, of Alabama, who under the Tyler administration became a minister to Belgium, presented on the floor of Congress the viewpoint of the Whigs on the question of executive authority. This is what he had to say in part:

"The glory of our political system hitherto has been, that power was distributed, checked, guarded; that the Legislative power was one thing, the Executive power another, and that of the Judiciary distinct from both these. But if the President is to be allowed to seize and exert one of the most important powers of Congress—no less a power than that of deciding the question of war or peace; and if, in the very body whose authority has been thus violated and condemned; if in this body, representing the people directly; this body, which ought forever to stand between Executive aggressions and popular rights; this body, which is to decide whether the country shall go to war or continue at peace; this body, without whose votes not a single tax can be laid, not a single dollar expended; if, I say, in this representative body, men are to rise up and sustain this usurpation of the President, then it will hardly be worth while long to go through the forms of legislation. We may take down the mace from beside your chair; we may leave these seats vacant, and, placing all the powers of the Government in the hands of one man, commit the prosperity, the liberties, and the glory of the country to his keeping. . . . There are great principles which are essential to liberty; it cannot exist without them. These the Whigs seek to preserve. The very first of these principles is resistance to Executive power. It is a singular fact that the party styling itself Democratic, seeks to clothe the President with almost royal attributes; it sustains him in all his assumptions of authority, in all his usurpations of power."

We are not to assume that this criticism of the President by Hilliard grew out of personal animosity, but from a

deep-rooted party conviction. As Lincoln once stated, about a problem, "There is a principle involved, and if we once yield to a wrong principle, that concession will be the prolific source of endless mischief."

There is no doubt but what Lincoln would have subscribed to these principles laid down by Hilliard, as they were basic in the thinking of the old-line Whigs. It is not strange that some of these party dogmas would find expression in the new Republican Party, which was so largely formed from the Whigs, and would determine to some extent the reaction of the party to each succeeding emergency.

Further elaborating on the Whig position, Lincoln said in a speech before Congress: "To you, the President and the country seem all to be one. You are interested to see no distinction between them, and I venture to suggest that probably your interest blinds you a little. We see the distinction, as we think, clearly enough; and our friends who have fought in the war have no difficulty in seeing it."

When Lincoln himself became President, in 1861, he was confronted with testing the old Whig doctrine from the executive viewpoint. In his first message to Congress at the very beginning of his address he said in the face of an insurrection: "Of all that which a President might constitutionally and justifiably do in such a case, everything was foreborn, without which it was believed possible to keep the government on foot."

In the same address he defended his attitude toward the aggressors by referring to this statement in his inaugural address: "You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors." He then said that "he took pains not only to keep this declaration good but also to keep the case so free from ingenious sophistry that the world should not be able to misunderstand it."

Lincoln was undoubtedly thinking of the old Whig doctrine about executive authority when he said in his first annual message to Congress, "I have been unwilling to go beyond the pressure of necessity in the usual exercise of power."

This attitude towards usurpation of power was an inheritance from the Whigs which Lincoln could never relinquish, and even when he became President, he was especially careful that he did not obstruct or make obsolete either the legislative or judiciary functions.

Lincoln Flashing Wit Here

(Other Story on Page 9)

By VAN G. SAUTER
Standard-Times Staff Writer

On a balmy afternoon in September 1848, a middle-aged congressman from Illinois—tall, gaunt and clean-shaven—got off a sooty train in New Bedford and made his way to the County Street mansion of his colleague in the House, Joseph Grinnell.

The plainly-dressed man, on a barnstorming tour of New England, had attended a Whig convention in Worcester the day before and had been persuaded to add New Bedford to his speaking schedule.

The Morning Mercury of Sept. 14 noted that the "Hon. A. Lincoln, a member of Congress," would address the Whigs that night at Liberty Hall (now the site of the Merchants National Bank).

Unknown Here

In 1848 the 39-year-old attorney from Springfield, Ill., was generally unknown outside his home State. A few speeches before Congress had attracted some attention, but nothing that would indicate the momentous events of the future.

New Bedford was a small community that had been incorporated only the year before. Approximately 250 whaling vessels referred to the harbor as home port, and the town boundaries were Rockland Street on the south and Merrimac Street on the north. Few dwellings existed west of County Street.

The Whig candidate of 1848—Zachary Taylor—was hard pressed by the Democrat—General Lewis Cass of Michigan—and the Free Soiler (anti-slavery)—former President—Martin Van Buren.

Massachusetts—and New Bedford in particular—was a hot-bed of abolitionists, and Abraham Lincoln was dispatched to the Commonwealth to do "some missionary work" for the Whigs.

A large crowd turned out to hear the speech in the plain wooden hall, at one time the home of the Unitarian Society. A covey of local politicians and candidates crowded the podium. Mr. Lincoln spoke for two hours.

Loathed Slavery

He told the audience of his pleasure at visiting "your side of the mountains," and then spun a few anecdotes to point out that the "folk" in Illinois and Massachusetts shared the same emotion—"loathing"—for slavery.

The correspondent for the Mercury wrote the next day that Lincoln spoke with "great originality, . . . clear . . . conclusive . . . convincing reasoning."

"We've rarely seen a more at-



ABRAHAM LINCOLN
As He Appeared in 1848

tentive audience. In fact, he took the house right between wind and water."

The paper noted that the speech was frequently enlivened by flashes of "genuine Western wit."

In those days the more refined Easterners often found themselves the target of the casual but cutting "Western wit."

In many speeches Mr. Lincoln compared the Free Soilers with the proverbial Yankee peddler "who offered a pair of pants large enough for any man, and small enough for any boy."

Cheer Speech

At the conclusion of his speech the audience fired off three lusty cheers for Mr. Lincoln, and three more for the Whig ticket.

One man in the audience—the

stern Quaker Samuel Rodman—remained immune to the enthusiasm generated by the speech. He wrote in his diary:

"In the evening went to Whig meeting which was addressed by Mr. Lincoln of Illinois. It was a pretty sound, but not a tasteful speech."

Mr. Lincoln spent the night at Congressman Grinnell's home, a building designed by the renowned architect, Russell Warren. It stands next to the Kennedy Youth Center. A picture of Mr. Grinnell, who assisted in founding the Wamsutta Mills, hangs in the lobby of the New Bedford Hotel.

The next morning Abraham Lincoln left for Boston, and the resumption of his planned tour. The Whigs carried New Bedford, Massachusetts and the nation.

ROUND TABLE TOLD LINCOLN NOT LOGROLLER

BY JAMES SULLIVAN

The Democratic state senator from Troy erased a dark mark from current biographies of the father of the Republican party last night at a meeting of The Civil War Round Table.

Abraham Lincoln was not a legislative logroller when he served in the state legislature from 1834 to 1841, altho he was not an outstanding lawmaker, Sen. Paul Simon reported.

Writing Lincoln Book

Simon, who is writing a book on Lincoln's four terms as a state representative, said that research disproves the story that Lincoln led the six other representatives and two senators from Sangamon county in logrolling. Logrolling in politics is the practice of mutual assistance to accomplish a particular end. It frequently is in the form of vote trading among lawmakers.

Known as the Big Nine because they were all more than 6 feet tall, the Sangamon lawmakers gave their votes, 10 per cent of all votes in the legislature, to pass the expanded internal improvements act of 1837 in return for passage of the act moving the capital from Vandalia to Springfield, according to the account in most current Lincoln biographies.

A study of voting records shows, Simon concluded, that "if there was logrolling for Springfield on the internal improvement act, it was either miserably handled or it was virtually nonexistent.

"The latter seems the logical conclusion," Simon said. Looking at the House record only, there are 25 recorded roll calls where logrolling could have taken place, excluding the 19 additional roll calls on internal improvements and capital relocation, he said.

Vote Together Twice

"On these 25 roll calls, the seven Sangamon [House] members were united on only five. Since all seven were Whigs, this is not only a lack of display of unity, but an unusual amount of division.

"On amendments to the internal improvements, increasing the scope of the act, the Sangamon delegation voted together on only two of the eight amendments," Simon explained.

"On one of these two in which they voted as a unit, they voted for a measure by John Hardin, who voted for Jacksonville as the state capital on all four amendments."

Lincoln's Image And Ideals Still Guide The People

By RALPH MCGILL

It was the approach of Mr. A. Lincoln's birthday that moved House Republicans into action to release the civil rights bill from a committee bondage and to the floor for debate. Had they not done so, they could not have made birthday speeches honoring the Great Emancipator today without being laughed out of the hall. (That they thus have provided us with an example of callous cynicism does not seem to trouble the congressmen.)



McGill

Mr. Lincoln died of an assassin's bullet more than 98 years ago, but his birthday still has power to get action in the area of conscience and human rights.

As we take a look at Mr. Lincoln and his impact on the events of his time, we see very plainly that his decision to save the Union, even though it meant war, served to confirm and establish a Federal Union. Until the conclusion provided by the four years of war and its impact on law and mind, we were a country of petty sovereignties, each avoiding the facts and meaning of the Constitution accepted in 1789.

MR. LINCOLN saw this plainly when he said: "My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery...." Lincoln became almost literally the incarnation of the Union, its meaning and purpose. Segregation extremists today take delight in lifting this declaration of Lincoln's about slavery out of context.

of history then loose in the world. All reality was directed toward eliminating the enslavement of human beings.

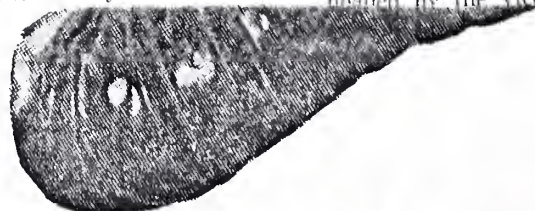
Lincoln knew that if the Union died in the war, then freedom and the government instituted by free men also would fail. So, there is no mystery in the Lincoln statement that his paramount objective was to save the Union.

LINCOLN'S political development as revealed by his speeches shows him to have been a Henry Clay Whig, with definite feelings for emancipation. (Such Whigs were described as "Conscience Whigs.") He was an anti-slavery man, but not an abolitionist. He was for an orderly process of emancipation.

But Lincoln was destined to be a spokesman for a trend that was felt then in all civilized countries. By the time he was debating Douglas, African slavery had become the central issue. It was this fact that so handicapped Douglas in his debates with Lincoln and, later, his hopes to be nominated by a whole party. The Democratic party was divided. Douglas, a patriotic man with undoubted love of country, also wanted to save the Union. He saw, and said, that the Southern Democrats who were then proposing to bolt the party and to lead their states out of the Union were advocating disaster and defeat. They were.

LINCOLN, a "Conscience Whig," hated slavery, but wanted to win, if he could, voluntary agreement to abolition. He tried to do this as late as the Hampton Roads conference on Feb. 3, 1865, when he and U. S. Grant met with the Confederate Commissioners headed by the vice president.

Mr. Lincoln's
of
Lent
Lobs



LUBSIK



Lincoln Lore

June, 1976

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation...Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1660

DID LINCOLN CAUSE LOGAN'S DEFEAT?

Until the birth of the Republican party, Illinois was a Democratic state. When Abraham Lincoln served in the United States House of Representatives (1847-1849), he was the lone Whig from Illinois, and his Seventh Congressional District gained the reputation of being the banner Whig district in the state. In the next Congress, Illinois again sent only one Whig, but this man, Lincoln's friend Edward D. Baker, won in another district. The Seventh fell to the Democrats in the congressional election following Lincoln's election. Another friend of Abraham Lincoln, former law partner Stephen Trigg Logan, was the Whig candidate who went down to defeat in the Seventh Congressional District, and many historians have said that the burden of Congressman Lincoln's unpopular record of opposition to the Mexican War doomed Logan's chance of victory.

The dates involved in this problem are confusing to the modern reader and should be explained here before discussing the election. Doubtless many a modern voter gasped when television announcers reported, along with the results of the recent Presidential primary in Pennsylvania, that there were no less than twenty-two primaries to go before the November elections. Nineteenth-century American voters experienced a similarly endless churning of the political cauldron *every year*. There were no Presidential primaries, of course, but election dates were not systematized and elections were occurring at all times somewhere in the United States. The elections

The Field of Waterloo is ours!



THE WHIG CITADEL TAKEN!

The "Dead District" Redeemed!!

HARRIS ELECTED!!!

STATE REGISTER OFFICE, AUGUST 9.

It affords us heart-felt gratification to announce to our friends that the "dead district" is redeemed from the thrakdom of whigery. Nobly have our friends performed their duty and most nobly have their gallant exertions been repaid! We can say no more now, but give a statement of the majorities below, which the official returns will not materially change. Huzza for Cass and Butler, Harris and Victory!!

	Harris.	Logan.
Putnam, - - - -	20 maj.	—
Marshall, - - - -	96	—
Woodford, - - - -	190	—
Tazewell, - - - -	—	200 maj.
Logan, - - - -	—	10
Mason, - - - -	116	—
Menard, - - - -	76	—
Sangamon, - - - -	—	263
Morgan, - - - -	64	—
Scott, - - - -	63	—
Cass, - - - -	7	—
	632	473

Harris' majority 159!!

which sent Lincoln and his colleagues to the House of Representatives were held over a period of a year and three months. Lincoln's was one of the earliest. He was elected early in August of 1846, but he did not take his seat in the House until December of 1847. Louisiana, by contrast, held its election for representatives to the same Congress in November of 1847, just a month before Congress convened. There were not even standardizations by region. Though Lincoln was elected in August of 1846, neighboring Indiana chose Lincoln's Hoosier colleagues a full year later, in August of 1847.

Stephen Logan's ill-starred election day, then, was August 7, 1848. Three months later Illinois voters returned to the polls to select a President of the United States, either Democrat Lewis Cass or Whig Zachary Taylor. Congressman Abraham Lincoln remained in Washington after Congress adjourned on August 14, 1848, to help the Whig Central Committee with the national Whig campaign. Illinois Whigs chose him as an Assistant Elector on August 23, 1848. This meant that he had been chosen to make speeches in Taylor's behalf in Illinois. Despite the choice as Assistant Elector, Congressman Lincoln remained in Washington throughout August and travelled to Massachusetts in September to campaign for Taylor. Time was growing short to fulfill his duties as Assistant Elector in Illinois, so Lincoln went directly to Albany from Massachusetts, and then to Buffalo, from which he took a steamer across the Great Lakes to Illinois. By October 6, he was delivering a

speech in Chicago. On October 10, 1848, he arrived in Springfield to campaign for Taylor in his own district. By the first week in December, Congressman Lincoln had returned to Washington to attend the short (or lame-duck) session of Congress. This session met before the President (elected in November) took office on March 5, 1849 (normally, the date was March 4, but in 1849 that day was a Sunday and therefore unsuitable for the inaugural ceremonies).

The local Democrats were jubilant when Logan lost to Thomas L. Harris. Immediately, they crowed that Lincoln's record was unpopular with the people of central Illinois. Referring to Lincoln's so-called Spot Resolutions, which had demanded that President Polk point out the specific spot of allegedly American soil on which American blood had been shed to initiate the Mexican War, the *Illinois State Register* claimed that the "spot" was at last "wiped out." "When Lincoln was elected," said the Democratic newspaper, "he made no declaration of principles in regard to the war before the people, as he himself tells us in his first speech in Congress. Therefore the people of the seventh Congressional district are not responsible for the anti-war speeches and anti-war votes" of their Whig congressman. "But," the *Register* went on, "it was otherwise in relation to Logan. He had committed himself in the legislature against the war, and his sentiments were well known to the people, — and they promptly rejected him. This proves that . . . they are patriotic, true lovers of their country."

Abraham Lincoln did not interpret the results that way, of course. Writing on August 28, 1848, to William Schouler, the editor of the Boston *Daily Atlas*, Lincoln said:

I would rather not be put upon explaining how Logan was defeated in my district. In the first place I have no particulars from there, my friends, supposing I am on the road home, not having written me. Whether there was a full turn out of the voters I have as yet not learned. The most I can now say is that a good many Whigs, without good cause, as I think, were unwilling to go for Logan, and some of them so wrote me before the election. On the other hand Harris was a Major of the war, and fought at Cerro Gordo, where several Whigs of the district fought with him. These two facts and their effects, I presume tell the whole story. That there is any political change against us in the district I cannot believe; because I wrote some time ago to every county of the district for an account of changes; and, in answer I got the names of four against us, eighty-three for us. I dislike to predict, but it seems to me the district must and will be found right side up again in November.

In a debunker's rush to judgment, historians have called this letter evasive and concluded that Lincoln was the cause of Logan's defeat.

"In the Seventh District," Albert Beveridge declared flatly, "Logan ran on Lincoln's record and was badly beaten." It "would have hurt Logan had he taken the stump for him at that time; for, . . . Lincoln's popularity at home had been seriously impaired, if indeed it were not for the moment destroyed." His reception when he did come to work for Taylor was, according to Beveridge, dismal:

Finally he reached home, but no mention of his arrival was made in any paper. What further part he took in the campaign in Illinois does not appear, except that at one meeting in a small town in Sangamon County, just before the Presidential election, the crowd was unfriendly and a Democratic speaker handled him roughly. As we have seen, Logan had been overwhelmed in the August elections. The result of Lincoln's first session in Congress had been a political revolution among his constituents, and, . . . he returned to Washington a dispirited man.

The atmosphere of rejection and isolation which Beveridge conjured up by saying that Lincoln's arrival went unnoticed, that only one recorded speech was made (and that in a

"small" town), and that Lincoln was "a dispirited man" became even more pronounced in Donald W. Riddle's *Congressman Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957). He called the election "the ultimate repudiation of Lincoln's stand on the Mexican War—not by Democrats only, as might have been expected, but by Whigs." Although Riddle noted that Lincoln made many speeches for Taylor after his return to Illinois and the Seventh Congressional District (these had somehow escaped Beveridge's notice), he read political disaster into their reception. After giving two speeches near Springfield (in Jacksonville and Petersburg, the county seats respectively of Morgan and Menard Counties), Lincoln "beat a strategic retreat," concluding "that no good purpose was served by his continuing to speak in this part of the district." Riddle added:

What is most curious of all he made no speech in Springfield. The conclusion is inescapable. Lincoln was so unpopular in Springfield and its environs that although he was an official party spokesman it was inadvisable for him to speak there.

Lincoln left for the northern part of the district where third-party Free Soil sentiment was strong.

Why did Lincoln retreat from the Springfield area? This is Riddle's explanation:

. . . he made only two speeches in his home neighborhood. In these he was roughly handled. He spoke at Beardstown on October 19. Two days later he spoke in Jacksonville. There his platform opponent, Murray McConnell, attacked Lincoln for his war attitude, asserting that Lincoln had misrepresented his constituents. Lincoln was sufficiently stung to reply. He refused to believe that a majority of his constituents had favored the war. This was an extremely vulnerable defense, and McConnell pounced upon it: how, then, did Lincoln explain his party's defeat in the recent Congressional election? The *State Register* was informed by its Jacksonville correspondent that Lincoln was "used up" by McConnell. "Lincoln has made nothing by coming to this part of the country to make speeches," the Morgan County writer concluded.

Lincoln spoke in Petersburg, the county seat of Menard County while attending court there on October 23. This time the *State Register* claimed he was "used up" by William Ferguson. It appears that Lincoln concluded that no good purpose was served by his continuing to speak in this part of the district.

Riddle judged that Lincoln had very little clout in the north as well:

It was no encomium of his success as an Assistant Elector [that Illinois went for Cass instead of Taylor]. The vote in Putnam County [in the northern part of Lincoln's district] was despite his major argument—that slavery restriction would be furthered by electing Taylor. In view of what had occurred in Jacksonville and Petersburg Lincoln could not easily have concluded that he had won many votes for his candidate.

It should make us suspicious to find the same conclusions buttressed by the opposite evidence. Beveridge's claim that Lincoln was unpopular was based on Lincoln's delivering so few speeches for Taylor in his district. Riddle found that Lincoln did deliver many speeches in his district but concluded, if anything more tenaciously, that Lincoln was unpopular with his own constituents.

To cling to Beveridge's conclusion, then, Riddle had to do two things. First, he had to say that the speeches which newspapers reported were reported unfavorably. Second, he had to say that the unreported speeches had no political effect or the opposite political effect from that intended by Lincoln. Thus the reader learns that Lincoln was "used up" at Beardstown and Jacksonville and that he failed to stem the Free Soil tide in the north, especially in Putnam County.

The first contention is based on a hostile witness; Riddle referred to reports of speeches in Democratic newspapers. Democratic newspapers *without exception* reported that Whig speakers were "used up" by Democratic ones; Whig papers always found precisely the opposite to be the case. It was Lincoln's misfortune that only the Democratic report of his speech survived.

Riddle could still plead that he used the *only* evidence available. Such would also be his plea in the case of the speeches in the northern part of the district. There are no reports, hostile or friendly, of these speeches, so the historian must rely on the only evidence available: the results on election day as ascertained from the election statistics. The figures for the two elections are printed below:

CONGRESSIONAL (AUGUST) PRESIDENTIAL (NOVEMBER)

COUNTY	HARRIS (Dem.)	LOGAN (Whig)	CASS (Dem.)	TAYLOR (Whig)	VAN BUREN (Free Soil)
Cass	656	650	724	761	11
Logan	399	417	369	465	4
Marshall	341	244	322	304	41
Mason	452	336	403	391	7
Menard	648	570	488	605	1
Morgan	1,322	1,264	1,309	1,372	139
Putnam	238	219	185	266	299
Sangamon	1,386	1,649	1,336	1,943	47
Scott	662	616	649	798	15
Tazewell	678	899	593	1,097	96
Woodford	419	231	309	166	52
	7,201	7,095	6,687	8,168	712

Lincoln did not stem the Free Soil tide in Putnam County, which went for Van Buren. However, it should be noted that all the northern counties, Putnam, Woodford, and Marshall, had the Free Soil virus, that Lincoln visited *all* of them as well as Tazewell, that Marshall and Woodford went for Cass by smaller majorities than they had gone for Harris, and that Tazewell went for Taylor by a much greater majority than it had turned out for Logan. In other words, it seems only fair to say that, whereas Lincoln may not have helped much in Putnam, he certainly did not hurt anything in Tazewell, Marshall, or Woodford.

It also seems fair to apply the same test of election results to Lincoln's speeches which were reported as disasters by the Democratic press. The fullest report stemmed from the Jacksonville speech, which was reported in this way by the *Illinois State Register*:

Mr. McConnel then took up a copy of the journal of the House of Representatives of Congress, of January last, and showed that Mr. Lincoln *had refused to vote for a resolution of thanks to General Taylor and his brave comrades for his and their conduct at the battle of Buena Vista, until he had first voted an amendment thereto*, that this battle was fought in a war *unconstitutionally and unnecessarily* begun by the President. He then turned to Mr. Lincoln and compared his conduct in that vote with his conduct and speeches in favor of the war, and for carrying it on with spirit and vigor before he left home and while canvassing for the office of representative in Congress. He asked if Mr. Lincoln did not know when he gave that vote that he was *misrepresenting* the wishes of the patriotic people of this district, and did he do so by the influence of Mr. Polk or some whig leader. In the midst of the shower of fire that fell around him, Lincoln cried out, "No, I did not know it, and don't believe it yet." As quick as thought McConnel pointed to the August election as an evidence that he had so misrepresented his people, and to that most foul slander upon our district was mainly owing Logan's defeat for Congress. The people were tired of having their patriotism and love of country so shamefully misrepresented by whig Congress-

man and misunderstood by the American people, and they rose in their might and cast aside the men that disregarded the wishes of those who put them in power. Lincoln crouched in silence beneath the blows that fell thick and fast around him, and his friends held down their heads in shame.

Lincoln has made nothing by coming to this part of the country to make speeches. He had better have stayed away. Riddle agreed in substance with the Democrats, though not to the extent of saying that a "shower of fire" fell around Lincoln or that he "crouched in silence."

What, though, would happen if one applied the same test to this speech that is used for Lincoln's northern tour? Jacksonville was in Morgan County. The Whigs always had factional problems in Morgan. It was the only possible challenger to Sangamon's leadership in the Seventh Congressional District, turning out only about 350 - 500 fewer votes than Sangamon's whopping 3,000 or so votes. When Harris beat Logan in August, Morgan County, which had gone for Clay over Polk in 1844, went for the Democrat by 58 votes. Lincoln visited Morgan, and it went for Taylor by 63 votes in November. It would be a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy to say Lincoln caused the change, but it at least deserves mention and the same weight assigned to the vote in Putnam after Lincoln's appearance in that county.

Ignoring all partisan evidence from Democratic newspapers and disregarding the charges of Beveridge and Riddle, one could draw a very different picture of Lincoln's relation-

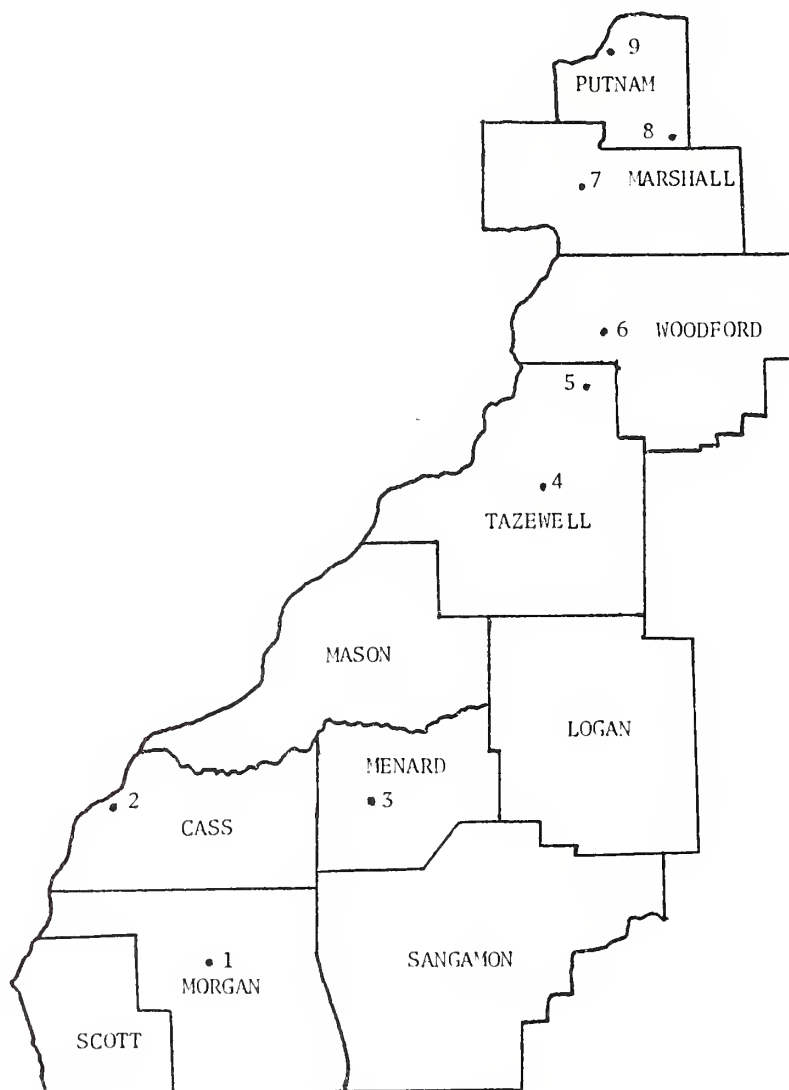


From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Stephen T. Logan was, according to William Herndon, "small—short—thin—and squarely put up and angularly built, running in figure and features to sharp keen points, lance like . . . He is frailly built—a froth network—nervous—quick—uneasy—restless . . . his voice is sharp and shrill—'squeaky & squealy.'"

ship with his constituents. Stephen T. Logan lost the congressional election in August to war hero Thomas L. Harris. Thinking him on his way after Congress recessed on the 14th, local Whigs chose incumbent Congressman Abraham Lincoln on August 27 as Assistant Elector to make speeches in November for Zachary Taylor. Lincoln chose to work for the national campaign first and then came home in October to help out the Taylor cause in his own district. He made about eight speeches in Taylor's behalf in the district. Every county except Woodford that Lincoln visited turned out more Whig voters for Taylor than it had for Logan three months earlier. This is not necessarily proof of Lincoln's prowess as a campaigner, but it is proof of his political acumen. He had predicted in August that the upset of Logan by Harris did not indicate any permanent reversal of political fortunes for the

Seventh District's Whig majority. He knew and stated flatly that the district would be found in Taylor's column in November. What role his own speaking efforts played in this is impossible to determine, but they could hardly have been a detriment.

It is even harder to say what role Lincoln's reputation played in Logan's defeat than to say what role his presence and political activity played in Taylor's victory in the Seventh Congressional District. All that can be said, within the confines of *Lincoln Lore's* limited pages, is that there is no indication that Lincoln's physical presence in the district had any dampening effect on Whig political fortunes in October or November, 1848. One must wonder, then, how Lincoln could have been more dangerous to Whig success just three months earlier while he was hundreds of miles away in Washington.



THE SEVENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Lincoln Campaign Speeches for Taylor, October, 1848

1. Jacksonville (MORGAN)
2. Beardstown (CASS)
3. Petersburg (MENARD)
4. Tremont (TAZEWELL)
5. Washington (TAZEWELL)
6. Metamora (WOODFORD)
7. Lacon (MARSHALL)
8. Magnolia (PUTNAM)
9. Hennepin (PUTNAM)



Lincoln Lore

April, 1978

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1682

PUTTING LINCOLN BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

In the first generation of scholarship on Lincoln, his life fell apart in his biographers' hands, and a century of diligent effort failed to put it back together again. The early writers, men like Ward Hill Lamon and William Henry Herndon who had known Lincoln personally, were puzzled by the career of an obscure prairie politician who suddenly became America's greatest President. His life seemed to fall into two parts, an early and rather uninspiring period of local partisan warfare followed by a late and most inspiring period of statesmanship. The only way to tie the two together was to say that Lincoln grew. Generally, they found a Lincoln diamond emerging late in life from a frontier dunghill. Only the vague idea of

growth stood between Lincoln students and a hopelessly fractured subject.

Later scholarship tended to accelerate the trend toward stressing Lincoln's capacity for growth as the key to his career. This is especially true of the last decade, when liberal historians felt it necessary to explain away Lincoln's views on race as expressed early in his life by pointing at his amazing capacity for growth in office. Stress on growth became, ironically, a rigid orthodoxy among writers interpreting the life of the Sixteenth President.

G. S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*, published this month by Memphis State University



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. President Lincoln appears oblivious to the economic workings of his administration, as the government grinds out greenbacks for greedy war contractors. The cartoonist could not have misinterpreted his subject more. G.S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* shows that Lincoln took a keen interest in economic questions all his life.

Press, puts Lincoln back together again more successfully than any previous effort. By any criterion of judgment, it is a superb book, as full of insights for the reader already steeped in Lincoln literature as for the reader who chooses it as his first serious book on the Sixteenth President. If it does not win the Pulitzer Prize for biography, then the selection committee will have a great deal of explaining to do. Through patient scholarship and wise avoidance of vogueish or trendy interpretations, Professor Boritt's work grew from a careful monograph (a dissertation written at Boston University a decade ago) into a well-considered but broad interpretation of Lincoln's life and mind. It is a book which can be ignored by no one seeking any kind of firm knowledge of Abraham Lincoln.

Boritt solves the problem that has plagued Lincoln scholars for a century simply by saying that Lincoln did not grow. Oh, to be sure, he learned a lot as he went along, but the diamond was there from earliest maturity, and it required little burnishing to give it character and brilliance. Why did biographers fail to recognize the quality of the Lincoln diamond as revealed in his early career? Because, says Boritt, Lincoln's brilliance shone early mainly in the realm of political economy, and that is not the arena in which heroes are made. Throughout his mature life, Lincoln had essentially an economic vision. And the word vision (or dream, to use Boritt's phrase) is appropriate in every respect. It was truly a dream or myth, sufficiently rooted in American realities to make it practical but also sufficiently prophetic to inspire the effort that made much of it come true. Much more so than anyone has ever realized before, the dream contradicted Thomas Jefferson's dream, the other heroic vision which has affected Americans with everything from distrust of cities to a love of large backyards as symbols of a yeoman's independence.

As brilliantly independent as Boritt's work is, I feel quite certain that it would have been impossible had Marvin Meyers not written *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1957). Meyers corrected a grave error in our interpretations of the Age of Jackson, which was also the formative age of Abraham Lincoln. Before his book, American historians saw in the Democratic party of Andrew Jackson the wave of the future, the harbinger of modern American society with its progressive economic ideas and its interest in the common man. Meyers saw in Jackson's party a very different undercurrent of longing for an older, Jeffersonian, pastoral America. The true harbingers of "progress," if by that term is meant the urban, industrial society of finance capitalism and social mobility, were the Whigs.

Boritt argues convincingly that Lincoln's was a Whig mind (in Meyer's sense). Indeed, it is his contention that Lincoln was always a Whig. After the demise of that unfortunate party, Lincoln became a Whig in Republican clothing — not in the sense that he proscribed Democrats who joined the Republican party, but in the sense that he always thought as a Whig would think.

Boritt would be the last to say that Lincoln was a slavish adherent of the Whig party line. In fact, it considerably pains him to find so many writers (among them, I fear, this reviewer on occasion) who have interpreted Lincoln's Whig years as years of narrow or unthinking party allegiance. To interpret Lincoln in such a way is to fall back into the old dichotomy that has always fragmented the life of Abraham Lincoln; it forces repetition of the tired and weak idea that a politician of limited vision was reborn in the slavery controversy as an idealistic leader and statesman. Boritt argues that Lincoln's mind was a Whig mind, but it was also a principled mind. He did not embrace the platform of Henry Clay because it was the route to political advancement; he embraced it because it was what underdeveloped Illinois needed. No common man had a chance to rise in life if the economic system was so primitive that there was no opportunity to make a better living. Canals, turnpikes, and railroads were valued as avenues to social rather than geographical mobility.

Although Lincoln's mind tended more often than not to arrive at a vision of Illinois's economic needs that was congruent with Whig party doctrines, this was not always so. As early as 1835, Lincoln broke with his Whig mentor John Todd Stuart over the issue of supporting a state bank when the Bank of the United States was impossible to salvage. If many

were to rise in Illinois, Lincoln knew, banks of some kind were a necessity. Lincoln, Boritt shrewdly points out, almost never agreed with "any of the noneconomic principles of his party." He knew the value of political organization (which most Whigs did not), and he never shared the Whigs' disdain for Catholic and foreign-born Americans. He stood only for that part of the Whig platform that he believed in; Lincoln's was an independent and principled mind.

Lincoln's principled actions stood out among his peers. For example, the Panic of 1837 made Illinois's grandiose internal improvements system economically unfeasible and, later, politically unpopular. Bipartisan enthusiasm had erected the system, and it was abandoned in bipartisan terror. Democrat Stephen Douglas, an early supporter, and Lincoln's Whig allies John J. Hardin and Edward D. Baker criticized the system when it was doomed. Lincoln persisted in its defense to the bitter end and may have paid for it with a reduced reputation within his own party. If anything, Lincoln was too idealistic rather than too political in his early career.

Thus we see one element which allows Boritt to tie this fragmented life together: he is willing to look at the Whig years on their own terms and not with a sneering disdain. Surely it is not hard to believe that the rise of the common man would have been facilitated more by canals, railroads, banks, and industry than by the hardscrabble rural economic conditions Lincoln had seen in his formative years in Indiana. There was statesmanship in the Whig program.

The second element in making Lincoln whole again is Boritt's realization that Lincoln clung to the vision all his political life. The Republican party, of course, was, as David Davis termed it, a "confederated" party, a loose and uneasy amalgam of former Whigs and former Democrats. It exacted from its former-Whig standard-bearer, Lincoln, a practical suppression of those economic issues so symbolic of Whiggery and so galling to former Democrats. Yet Lincoln did not



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. William Henry Harrison strikes a Napoleonic pose in this woodcut from a campaign biography published by Jesper Harding in Philadelphia in 1840. The Whigs at last had found a general to match Jackson.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. In America, Napoleonic generals would not do; therefore, Harrison became a Cincinnatus, returning to the plow as soon as the battle was over. His attire seems a bit formal for field work.

abandon his principles for his new party. As it turned out, he could have his cake and eat it too, for the Republican Congress during his Presidency, no longer stalled by a hostile Executive, enacted many of the old Whig programs without Lincoln's having to lift a finger. Wars always require a nationalizing economic program.

The circumstances of Lincoln's change from Whig to Republican allegiance, of course, are not exhausted by explaining the convenient coincidences of Lincoln's private views, national necessity, and a shift in party power in Washington, D.C. A continuing thread of principle stitched that great life together. In the 1850s, Lincoln, who tended to be a one-issue man all his life, perceived slavery's expansion as the greatest threat to the American dream of social mobility, and he moved to meet it. Note that this was not simply a matter of seeing the Slave Power's Congressmen as threats to tariff legislation. It was a far profounder fear that the political assumptions necessary to justify a thriving slave system necessarily degraded the common man's "right to rise," the heart of Lincoln's dream. Besides, the specific Whig policies — the Bank, the tariff, internal improvements — which Lincoln thought necessary to create economic opportunity were politically dead, long since abandoned by Whigs less principled than Lincoln. It was a time for fighting battles over the most fundamental assumptions.

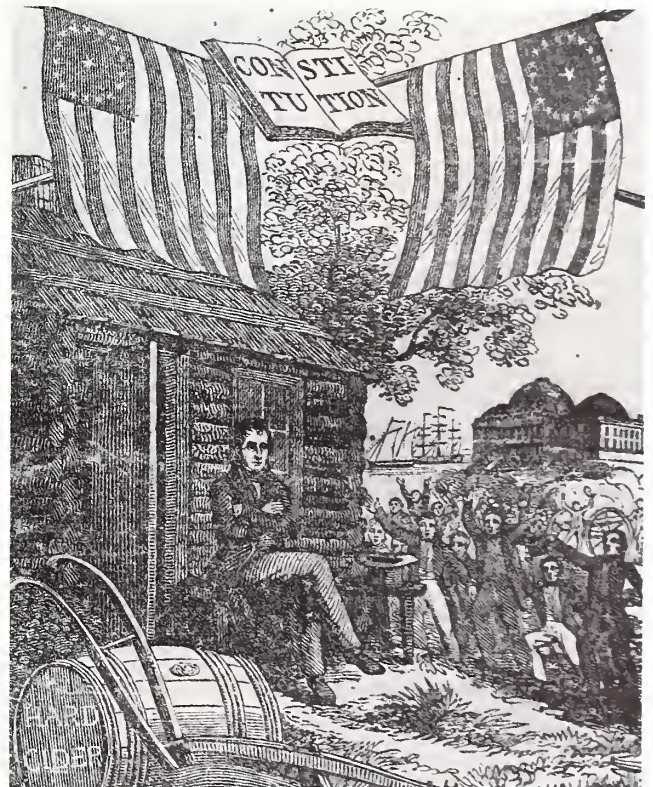
This hasty and impressionistic summary of the central theme of *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* fails to suggest the intricate web of meticulous scholarship which proves the point. The only way to render that in the short space available is to offer a sampling of some of the detailed insights that mark every chapter of the book.

Lincoln's nationalism, for example, has been repeatedly praised and endlessly invoked as an explanation of his policies, but it has been little analyzed, especially in his early career. Boritt makes a giant step forward when he notes carefully the role of the history of the internal improvements system in Illinois in structuring Lincoln's nationalism. Localism doomed the system from the start by exacting from its promoters some direct and tangible benefit, a railroad terminus

or a cash subsidy, for every locality. The result was an over-expanded scheme which had to be built everywhere at once. When it failed in the 1840s, the failure "helped make Lincoln a lifelong opponent of the localism and sectionalism that had proved so destructive in Illinois." He would see secession in the light of this experience, telling Congress when it convened on July 4, 1861: "This relative matter of National power, and state rights, as a principle, is no other than the principle of *generality*, and *locality*." Over-generous sops to local Southern interests could make the national edifice topple.

Other examples abound. In the realm of constitutional thought, for example, some Whigs, despite the fact that their party took its name from the great English party that championed constitutional limits to monarchical tyranny, took a notoriously cavalier attitude toward constitutions. This was one aspect of noneconomic Whiggery which Lincoln shared with the giants of his party. He loathed constitutional wrangles and justified the Bank of the United States as something "necessary and proper" under the vaguely elastic general welfare clause. Here he parted ways from that temporary Whig but permanent constitutionalist, John C. Calhoun, "who based his support for the Bank on its monetary function and on the constitutional right of Congress to regulate the currency." Later, there was reason aplenty, despite Lincoln's carefully soothing assertions of having no designs on slavery where it already existed, for Southerners to be scared to death by Lincoln. If the general welfare clause could justify a bank, it might justify an attack on slavery. "We think slavery impairs, and endangers the general welfare," said Republican Lincoln, and he was still Whiggish enough in his thinking to make that statement ominous.

Lincoln clung to a principled Whiggery far longer than most Whigs. By 1840, the Whigs had caught on to the great Democratic strategy for winning elections: ideas do not win; popular generals suffice very nicely. The party rushed to embrace William Henry Harrison, "General Mum," who stood for nothing. Most Whigs stood staunchly beside him on the same platform. Whig Lincoln "decided to stake a full year's



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. In this campaign woodcut the people clamor for a reticent Harrison, willing to sit simply by his log cabin with his cider barrel. The wealthy Harrison lived in a mansion.

campaigning on the question of national banking." He was deeply committed to a partisan issue, banking, but it was for the sake of the issue and not partisanship; the other Whigs were not saying a mumbling word about banking in 1840. Moreover, the corny nostalgia of the Harrison Log Cabin campaign left this refugee from a real log cabin cold; he had not fought "with trees and logs and grubs" until he was an adult in order to return to a log cabin.

On Lincoln's famous relationship with Henry Clay, we learn again that Lincoln liked the Kentucky Senator for his principles. From Henry Clay, Lincoln learned not only the American System but also a particularly non-silk-stocking version of Whiggery. Lincoln remained a friend of labor throughout his life. More rarely than most Republicans did Lincoln tend to gloss over class differences in the North by juxtaposing an ideal, monolithic "free labor system" against slavery in the South. Lincoln was somewhat different from Clay (and other old Whigs as well) in the candor of his appeal to, let us be blunt, avarice. The old Whigs had said that tariffs and internal improvements were means to the end of military might and real national independence. Lincoln said they were necessary to allow the common man to improve his station in life. He did not share Clay's orientation to the East and had trouble with Whig land policies. And when Clay began to relax his grip on Whig principles for the sake of his Presidential ambitions in the 1840s, Lincoln appears to have drifted away from Clay.

When Lincoln abandoned Clay for Zachary Taylor in 1848, he gave a speech against Taylor's opponent, Lewis Cass, which was hilarious, but it was also, in all honesty, a low piece of stump speaking. Boritt's interpretation of the place of this speech in Lincoln's works is astute: "... what is most noteworthy about this, in so many ways uncharacteristic speech (the weakest in substance up to this point in the surviving Lincoln corpus), [is] that many later scholars took it as a display of the quintessential Lincoln before the slavery controversy." As he points out, it is one of the best-known of the early speeches because it contributes to the myth of Lincoln's having been a narrow partisan politician before the slavery controversy.

Lincoln's propensity for thinking in terms of progressive economics lay behind his rejection of the idea that there was a natural geographical limit to slave expansion. He had always believed that man could make the desert bloom, just as America had already proven to England that her seeming economic desert could bloom with industry and a thriving economy.

Lincoln's Whig mind had startling effects on his Presidential policies. He tended to think that avarice could help bring the Union back together. He therefore held out the possibility of assuming the Confederate debt and of compensating slave owners for emancipation long after other Republicans had abandoned such ideas. In fact, Lincoln's famed "plan of reconstruction," to the degree that he had one, was frankly and boldly economic. This penchant for economic schemes led Lincoln to a high tolerance for trading in Southern cotton during the war. The President felt almost to the end that gains in such trade undermined the political loyalties of cotton-rich Confederates.

Boritt accumulates a remarkable amount of evidence that indicates that Lincoln had an economic rather than a political understanding of democracy. "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy," said Lincoln. For any political understanding of the idea, such a definition was absurd. The United States was the most democratic country on earth and one of the last bastions of slavery; Western Europe had no slavery and, for the most part, no democracy either.

As with all interpretations which bring unity where previously there was fragmentation and disarray, there are some aspects of the argument which strain credulity. For example, it comes as something of a shock to find the principled Lincoln going for Taylor in '48. In part, this is a failing of the author to supply a decent context of party history, so that the reader realizes the desperation with which Whigs longed for victory after so many lean years at the polls. In part, though, it is a function of having overdrawn the principled nature of Lincoln's previous career. This becomes a more serious problem when Boritt argues that Lincoln learned from this cam-

paign and adopted as his own the Whig idea that the President should be weak. Much of what Boritt says about Lincoln the President hinges on Lincoln's holding the Whig view of the Executive's role, and it is not plausible to think that Lincoln picked this idea up in a no-issue campaign in which Whigs baldly claimed that Taylor's lack of platform was a function of his view that the President simply carried out the will of Congress, be that what it may. In other words, we are presented a principled man picking up a noneconomic principle from a party from which he usually takes only economic principles at a time when the party had, in a naked lust for office, chucked its principles and cloaked its abandonment of platform behind the principle adopted.

Perhaps it is only the startling newness of Boritt's interpretation, but I cannot help cringing at the flat statement that Lincoln "saw economic rights as more fundamental than political ones." Boritt uses this interpretation to explain President Lincoln's willingness "to make temporary sacrifices of certain political liberties — the right of *habeas corpus* for example." To ignore *all* the political content of Lincoln's political thought cannot but do violence to a proper understanding of the war years. It was no economic understanding of democracy which led Lincoln to hold the election of 1864, as scheduled, and to say: "... if the rebellion could force us to forego, or postpone a national election, it might fairly claim to have already conquered and ruined us." Here, as in several other places in the section on the Presidency, Professor Boritt goes overboard in his enthusiasm for this fresh interpretation.

But who can blame him? Weighed in the balance against his great accomplishment in this book, the faults are very slight indeed. In part, of course, this is due to a good mind at work. In part, it is a function of patience and diligence. Boritt has looked at things in collections ranging from the Massachusetts Historical Society to the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California. He has read manuscripts, newspapers, and secondary sources both seminal and obscure. And he has distilled it all into an elegantly written and tightly organized book — the best written on Lincoln in many, many years.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. In Zachary Taylor the Whigs found another popular general who made a platform of having no platform. He would not impose his will on the nation; he would simply carry out the will of Congress.



Lincoln Lore

May, 1978

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1683

LINCOLN'S THEORY OF REPRESENTATION: A SIGNIFICANT NEW LINCOLN DOCUMENT

Editor's Note: I am indebted to Mr. James T. Hickey, Curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, for calling the text discussed below to my attention and for allowing *Lincoln Lore* to reproduce it. It represents a small part of the greatest new Lincoln collection made available in years, the private papers of Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln. These papers are now deposited at the Illinois State Historical Library. M.E.N., Jr.

"Please do me the favor to inform me whether the enclosed document headed 'Abraham Lincoln's Views', is in your father's handwriting," Richard Yates asked in a letter to Robert Todd Lincoln on December 16, 1909. Yates's father, also named Richard, had been the Governor of Illinois during the Civil War and a political associate of Abraham Lincoln. The elder Yates had preserved the document "for many years in an envelope containing certain letters" from Robert Todd Lincoln's father to him, and, the younger Yates added, "I have kept it since my father's death thirty-six years ago, on the supposition that it was in President Lincoln's handwriting."

Robert Todd Lincoln replied:

I am very much interested in the autograph manuscript of my father which you sent me in your letter of the 16th instant, and which I return to you.

To answer your question as to whether it is in my father's handwriting, specifically, I can answer that it undoubtedly is. While it is not dated, it is apparent that it was written when he was a candidate for election to

his one term in Congress, and it is to me exceedingly interesting as showing that even then he was filled with the thoughts of the identical questions which were the basis of his debate with Senator Douglas. There is no copy of the document among his papers, and I have taken the liberty of having a copy made for my own files; but with no intention of publishing it.

The original document owned by Yates has never been found, and Robert Todd Lincoln's typed copy remains the only version of the document available to Lincoln students. If we may trust Robert's judgment in the matter of his father's handwriting, then the text represents a previously unpublished Lincoln document of considerable significance. And surely Robert was a reliable expert on his father's handwriting. Not only did he receive letters from his father, but Robert was also for many years the "curator" of his father's Presidential papers. For four years he had been lugging seven trunks full of papers back and forth between Washington, D.C., and his summer home. He had on numerous occasions scoured them in searching for particular items that people like Richard Yates asked him about (note that he could say that there was "no copy of the document" among his father's papers).

The typed copy of the document reads thus:

A. Lincoln's view of the Right Position

In relation to the slavery question — Wilmot Proviso — Mr. Clay's compromise, and so on, I think there



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Richard Yates (1815-1873) was Governor of Illinois during the Civil War. He met Abraham Lincoln in the 1830s, when both men were Henry Clay Whigs. He served three terms in the Illinois legislature and two in the United States House of Representatives before becoming Governor of Illinois.

is good reason for hoping that the whole will be settled before my service will commence, should I be elected.

But if elected, and, on taking my seat, this question shall still be open, and the wish of my district upon it shall be known to me, that wish shall govern me.

If, however, that wish shall not be known to me, and I shall be left to the exercise of my own judgment upon the question, I shall be governed by the then existing state of things, which may then be as different from what it now is, as it now is from what it was a year and a half or two years ago.

There are, however, some things upon which I feel that I am, and shall remain, inflexible — One of them is my opposition to the extension of slavery into territories now free — In accordance with this, I have been for the Wilmot Proviso; and I should adhere to it in Congress, so long as I should suppose such adherence, the best mode of preventing such extension of slavery; and, at the same time as not endangering, any dearer object — In this I mean to say I can conceive a case in which a dogged adherence to the Proviso by a few, might aid the extension of slavery, — that is, might fail in its direct object, defeat other restraining measures, and allow slavery to be pushed wherever nature would allow — and in such a case, should I believe it to exist, I would at once abandon the Proviso — Again, of all political objects the preservation of the Union stands number one with me; and whenever I should believe my adherence to the Proviso tended to endanger the Union, I would at once abandon it.

I have now distinctly stated the principles upon which I shall act, in relation to this question, if elected.

While on this subject I will say, I have not at any time supposed the Union to be in so much danger as some others have — I have doubted, and still doubt, whether a majority of the voters, in any Congressional District in the nation are in favor of dissolution in any event — slavery restricted, or slavery extended.

Still it is arrogant — silly perhaps — to entirely disregard the opinions of the very many great and good men who think there is real danger — With great distrust of my own ability, and reasonable deference to the opinions of the author of the late compromise bill, I some what regretted the defeat of that measure; and had it passed the Senate, and I been a member of the lower House I think I should have voted for it, unless my district had otherwise directed me.

The document is a good deal more difficult to interpret than Robert thought. It could not have been "written when he was a candidate for election to his one term in Congress." David Wilmot introduced his famous Proviso on the afternoon of August 8, 1846. Lincoln won election to Congress on August 3, 1846. He could not have taken a position on an issue which did not exist while he was running for Congress. Moreover, Lincoln speaks in the document of the defeat of Henry Clay's "late compromise bill." This defeat did not occur until August of 1850.

By 1850, Congressional elections in Illinois were held in November, and Lincoln's statement might very well have been written in the midst of the contest between Whig Richard Yates and Democrat Thomas L. Harris for the local district's seat in the United States House of Representatives. Harris had won Lincoln's seat in 1848, in a contest against Stephen T. Logan, a miserable campaigner. Yates reclaimed the district for the Whigs in 1850.

Lincoln's statement clearly touches on the major issues in the 1850 contest. The Democratic organ, the *Illinois State Register*, sought to embarrass the local Whigs for inconsistent stances on national issues. Yates had been a member of the Illinois General Assembly from 1848 to 1850, when the Whig members voted to instruct the United States Senators from Illinois to insist on the Wilmot Proviso, which would have barred slavery from any territory acquired as a result of the Mexican War. In the electoral contest in 1850, however, Yates apparently supported Henry Clay's compromise proposal, which would have allowed some territories gained from the Mexican War to organize as states with or without slavery, as the people in the territories should themselves determine. Democrats also accused Yates of trying to dodge the issue, it being unclear how Yates reconciled slavery's exclusion with Clay's compromise measures. Democrats accused Yates of voting for instructing Illinois's United States Senators to vote for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, something which Clay's compromise measures conspicuously did not urge.

The substance and tone of Lincoln's remarks certainly fit this delicate political situation. "I have been for the Wilmot

Proviso," Lincoln said, but he would "adhere to it in Congress" only as long as it did not endanger "any dearer object." He added pointedly that "of all political objects the preservation of the Union stands number one with me; and whenever I should believe my adherence to the Proviso tended to endanger the Union, I would at once abandon it." Yates could very well assume Lincoln's position on these points. Yates had been for the Wilmot Proviso, but he might change his position if a "dogged adherence" to it would endanger the Union. In light of Democratic charges that Yates was dodging, Lincoln's statement that he had "now distinctly stated the principles upon which I shall act" seems very much to the point. It is notable, too, that Lincoln did not say, as he would later in his life, that he had voted for the Wilmot Proviso many times while he served in the United States House of Representatives. Thus there is nothing in the statement which could not as well have been used by Yates as by Lincoln.

Although it is generally assumed that Lincoln's political ambitions slumbered after 1849, there is a possibility that the statement was an attempt to address the issues of 1850 in his own behalf. The reference to his personal feeling that he had "not at any time supposed the Union to be in so much danger as some others have" was characteristic of Lincoln's attitude around 1850. There is a letter marked "*Confidential*" in the Yates Papers which indicates that some people among Yates's supporters feared that Lincoln wanted to run for Congress:

[Joseph O.] King has been absent for ten days, I learn he has been sent to the upper part of the district by the Lincoln faction for the purpose of preparing the minds of the people against our wishes in this end of the district.

Look out or you will be defeated by pretended friends before the convention assembles.

You have grate confidence in [John Todd] Stuart; he may be your friend in some things, but he is for Lincoln for Congress.

Yours truly
Butler

Stuart's preference may not have been Lincoln's, however, and the fact remains that Lincoln supported Yates when he ran for Congress in 1850.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Robert Todd Lincoln

The statement is titled "A. Lincoln's view of the Right Position" rather than "Lincoln's Position." Just two years before, Lincoln had written a similar statement for Zachary Taylor, putting words in that Presidential candidate's mouth in a similar way: "The question of a national bank is at rest; were I President I should not urge it's reiteration upon Congress." It seems likely that this later statement, too, was meant for another's use.

The views were, nevertheless, Lincoln's views. Some of them are of interest. For example, he speaks of slavery's being "pushed wherever nature would allow." This remark suggests the idea that climate could determine the ability of slavery to expand, an idea which Lincoln would quarrel with later in his career.

It is also remarkable to note the degree to which Lincoln adhered to the idea that representatives could be instructed how to vote by their constituents. The idea of instructed representation was not in itself an issue in 1850, but there were numerous references to Yates's having voted to instruct Senators to do what he now would not do himself. Lincoln was a staunch believer in tying the representative closely to the will of his constituents. In 1848, Lincoln called instruction "the primary, the cardinal, the one great living principle of all Democratic representative government — the principle, that the representative is bound to carry out the known will of his constituents." He recognized, however, that instruction was essentially a Democratic dogma. In 1854, he argued that if the Illinois legislature "should instruct Douglas to vote for the repeal of the Nebraska Bill, he must do it, for 'the doctrine of instructions' was a part of his political creed." "A. Lincoln's view of the Right Position" is the only document wherein Lin-

coln reveals his personal willingness to be governed strictly by "the wish of my district" on issues as important as "the slavery question — Wilmot Proviso — Mr. Clay's compromise." He may have qualified his commitment by adding that "There are, however, some things upon which I feel that I am, and shall remain, inflexible." This contradiction followed his statement that he would be governed by the circumstances of the moment, sometime hence, when he would arrive in Congress — not his statement that he would be guided by "the wish of my district" if that wish "shall be known to me." Apparently, he took the ultra-democratic ground that instruction could overrule his personal views even on "the slavery question."

The clarity with which Lincoln announced the primacy of Union in his political beliefs is also of great significance. His willingness to "abandon" the Wilmot Proviso "at once" if it "tended to endanger the Union" is somewhat at odds with later statements in which he viewed the Union as the vehicle of liberty and made it unclear whether union or freedom could be considered of prime importance.

"A Lincoln's view of the Right Position" is a short document, but one worthy of deep study. It deals with fundamental assumptions about democratic government. It might be interpreted as a sign of the survival of Lincoln's political ambition beyond a period when such ambitions were supposed to have disappeared. It is a significant addition to the body of evidence bearing on Lincoln's views on slavery, still the most important subject for study in the Lincoln field. It is safe to predict that it will be, despite its brevity, an oft-quoted and much-interpreted document.



A grand Slave hunt, or Trial of speed for the Presidency, between the celebrated nags Black Dan, Lewis Cass, and Hayne.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. The Compromise of 1850 made and destroyed many historical reputations and posed great difficulties for most antislavery Whigs. In this cartoon Daniel Webster is depicted as a slave-catcher, chasing slave women and children with a copy of the Fugitive Slave Law in his hand. The Compromise of 1850 included a tougher Fugitive Slave Law, which antislavery Whigs found hard to swallow. Those who had supported the Wilmot Proviso a mere year or two earlier were likewise embarrassed by having to accept the possibility of slavery in some of the territory acquired from Mexico.

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY 1976-1977

by Mary Jane Hubler

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members: Dr. Kenneth A. Bernard, Belmont Arms, 51 Belmont St., Apt. C-2, South Easton, Mass.; Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Rd., Garden City, N.Y.; Carl Haverlin, 8619 Louise Avenue, Northridge, California; James T. Hickey, Illinois State Historical Library, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois; E.B. (Pete) Long, 607 S. 15th St., Laramie, Wyoming; Ralph G. Newman, 175 E. Delaware Place, 5112, Chicago, Illinois; Hon. Fred Schwengel, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C.; Dr. Wayne C. Temple, 1121 S. 4th Street Court, Springfield, Illinois. New items available for consideration may be sent to the above persons, or the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum.

1976

(EAKINS PRESS FOUNDATION)

1976-28

An Album Of Lincoln Photographs And Words/(Portrait of Lincoln facing left)/(Cover title)/(Copyright 1976 by the Eakins Press Foundation.)

Folder, flexible boards, 5 7/8" x 4 1/4", single sheet folded seven times, (15) pp., illus., price, \$1.95.

WILEY, BELL I.

1976-29

Abraham Lincoln: A Southerner's Estimate After 110 Years/Bell I. Wiley/The Andrew W. Mellon Professor/in the Humanities, Tulane University/Fall, 1975/The/Graduate School/Tulane University/New Orleans, La., 70118/[Copyright 1976 by Tulane University. All rights reserved.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 9" x 5 7/8", 29 (1) pp. Autographed copy by author.

1977

BALSIGER, DAVID AND CHARLES E.**SELLIER, JR.**

1977-6

The Lincoln Conspiracy/by/David Balsiger/and/Charles E. Sellier, Jr./(Device)/Schick Sunn Classic Books/Los Angeles, California/©1977 Schick Sunn Classic Productions, Inc./All Rights Reserved/Printed in the United States of America/Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 77-73521/International Standard Book Number: 0-917214-03-X/

Book, paper, 7" x 4 1/8", 320 pp., illus., price, \$2.25.

BASLER, ROY P.

1977-7

Roy P. Basler/*President Lincoln Helps His Old Friends*/(Caption title)/[Published by the Abraham Lincoln Association, Springfield, Illinois.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8 15/16" x 6 3/16", fr., fd., 16 pp.

DYBA, THOMAS J.

1977-8

The Story of the Only Home/Abraham Lincoln/Ever Owned/(Picture of Springfield Home)/Eighth and Jackson Streets/Springfield, Illinois/1844-1861/(Cover title)/[Copyright 1977 by Thomas J. Dyba. Published by Illinois Benedictine College, Lisle, Illinois. First edition.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8 3/8" x 5 1/2", (16) pp. including illustrated clear transparent pages preceding and following the text, illus.

GOLD, MARVIN

(1977)-9

John Frank of St. Charles./(Picture of John Frank at work)/Robert Hostkoetter/(Cover title)/

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", (4) pp., single sheet folded once, illus. Autographed copy by Lincoln sculptor, John Frank.

IMAI, MASAO

1977-10

(Title: Lincoln)/[Copyright 1976 by Masao Imai. Published by Bunken Publishing Company on April 1, 1977. Entire contents of book printed in Japanese language.]

Book, cloth, 8 3/4" x 6 1/4", 158 (2) pp., illus., front and back covers illustrated with scenes and caricatures

Juvenile literature.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1977-11

Lincoln Memorial University Press/(Device)/Summer 1977/Vol. 79, No. 2/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and/the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education./[Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 45-92 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$2.50.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1977-12

Lincoln Memorial University Press/(Device)/Fall, 1977/Vol. 79, No. 3/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and/the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education./[Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 93-140 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$2.50.

McGINNIS, RALPH Y.

1977-13

Quotations/from/Abraham Lincoln/Edited by/Ralph Y. McGinnis/Nelson-Hall/Chicago/[Copyright 1977 by Ralph McGinnis. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 10 1/4" x 8 1/4", fr., x p., 134 pp., consecutive Brady portrait of Lincoln on front and back covers and inside front and back covers, illus., price, \$12.95.

RISVOLD, FLOYD E. AND**JOHN M. RUSSELL**

1977-14

Bulletin Of 33rd Annual Meeting/of/The Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin/held at Menomonie, Wisconsin/April 24, 1976/(Portrait of Lincoln)/Featuring remarks by/Floyd E. Risvold, Editor/of/Louis Weichmann's/A True History Of The Assassination Of/Abraham Lincoln And The Conspiracy Of 1865/and/Comments by Mr. John M. Russell concerning his play,*Black Friday*, a presentation of which the Fellowship/attended in the Mabel Tainter Building at Menomonie,/Wisconsin./Historical Bulletin No. 32/1977/(Cover title)/

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7 1/2", 16 pp., printing on inside back cover, illus., price, \$1.25. Send to Mrs. Carl Wilhelm, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

TEJIMA, YUSUKE

1977-15

(Title: Lincoln)/[Copyright 1977. Published by Shufunotomo Co., Ltd. on December 1977. Entire contents of book printed in Japanese language.]

Book, hard boards, 8 1/2" x 6", 165 (3) pp., colored illustrations at front of book, printed illustrations in contents of book, front and back covers illustrated. Juvenile literature.

TRUMP, FRED

1977-16

Lincoln's/Little/Girl/By Fred Trump/(Scene of cabin)/Heritage Books/Salina, Kansas/[Copyright 1977 by Heritage Books. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 8 3/4" x 5 1/2", 123 (5) pp., illus. Autographed copy by author.

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE**FOUNDATION**

1977-17

Lincoln Lore/Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month/by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801./Number 1667, January 1977 to Number 1672, June 1977.

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", 4 pp., illus. Number 1667, Abraham Lincoln and the Adams Family Myth, January 1977; Number 1668, Some Curiosities of a Congressional Career, February 1977; Number 1669, The Contents of Lincoln's Pockets at Ford's Theatre, March 1977; Number 1670, *With Malice Toward None* Bears Lincoln No Malice, April 1977; Number 1671, Lincoln Historiography: News And Notes, May 1977; Number 1672, Lincoln In The Orient, June 1977.

LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY**AND MUSEUM, THE**

1977-18

Lincoln Lore/Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published/each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801./Number 1673, July 1977 to Number 1678, December 1977.

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", 4 pp., illus. Number 1673, Lincoln Autographed Debates: Samuel Long Copy, July 1977; Number 1674, France and the United States: Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne Visits Lincoln's America, August 1977; Number 1675, Two New Lincoln Sites . . . Maybe, September 1977; Number 1676, Some Sober Second Thoughts about the New Constitutional History, October 1977; Number 1677, Nathaniel W. Stephenson and the Progressive Lincoln, November 1977; Number 1678, Index for 1977, December 1977.



Lincoln Lore

July, 1978

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

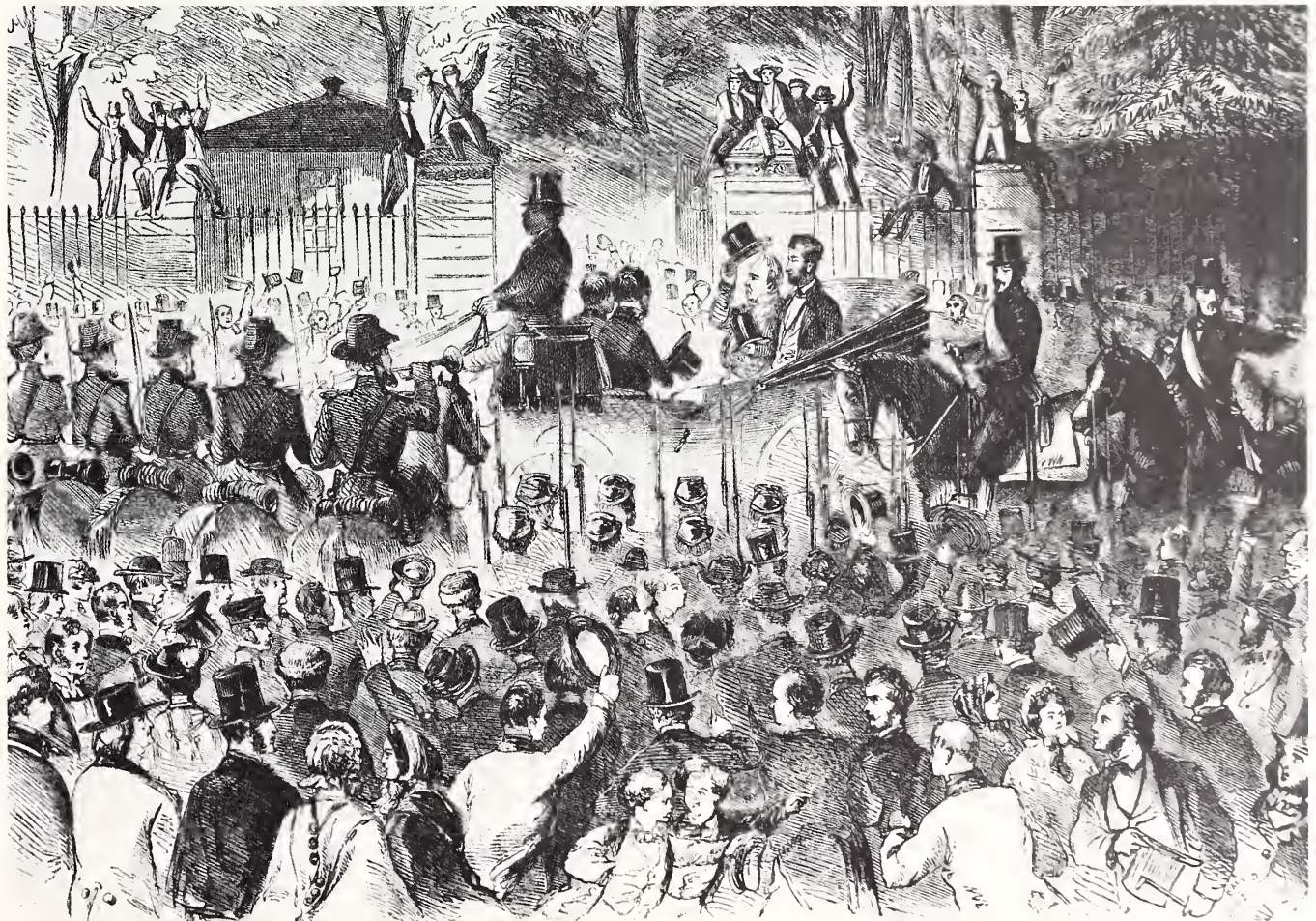
Number 1685

FIVE EX-PRESIDENTS WATCHED THE LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION

Presidents who retire from office are expected to become "elder statesmen." Former President Richard M. Nixon seems currently to be bidding for that status by promising to speak occasionally "in non-political forums." He will stress foreign policy, he says, because partisanship is supposed to end at America's shores. He promises to be above the partisan battles of the day; he will become an elder statesman.

In Lincoln's day, Presidents who left office did not automatically assume the status of elder statesmen. The five surviving ex-Presidents in 1861 — Martin Van Buren, John Tyler,

Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan — did have enough reputation for being above the party battles for it to be suggested more than once that they meet to find remedies for the secession crisis. That such a meeting never took place is eloquent testimony to the weakness of the non-partisan ideal in the nineteenth century. The broad public did not regard these men — and the ex-Presidents did not regard each other — as passionless Nestors well on their way to becoming marble statues. They proved, in fact, to be fiercely partisan.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Lincoln met two former Presidents shortly before his inauguration in 1861. Millard Fillmore greeted him in Buffalo, New York, and he met the incumbent, James Buchanan, twice in Washington. Reporters indicated that in both cases Lincoln chatted amiably, but no one knows the subjects of their conversations.

It was an irony that John Tyler came nearest to assuming an official status as a nonpartisan adjudicator in a conference meant to reconcile the sections, for he would later demonstrate the greatest partisan difference from the Lincoln administration of any of the former Presidents. By November of 1860, Tyler already thought it too late for a convocation of representatives of all the states to arrive at a compromise settlement which would save the Union. He did recommend a meeting of "border states" which would bear the brunt of any sectional war in the event a compromise was not reached. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri could at least arrange a peaceful separation of the South if they could not keep the Union together. Tyler's proposal never bore fruit, but, when the Virginia General Assembly proposed a peace conference of all states in Washington for February, 1861, Tyler became one of Virginia's five commissioners at the convention. The delegates in Washington elected Tyler president of the conference unanimously, but the convention was so divided in voting on recommendations that it was largely ignored by Congress. Tyler returned to Virginia and became an advocate of secession. When urged to lead a compromise movement after the fall of Fort Sumter in the spring, Tyler thought it hopeless. Lincoln, he said, "having weighed in the scales the value of a mere local Fort against the value of the Union itself" had brought on "the very collision he well knew would arise whenever Fort Sumter was attempted to be reinforced or provisioned." In November, Tyler was elected to serve in the Confederate House of Representatives. Far from becoming an elder statesman, John Tyler played a role in destroying the nation which had once elected him Vice-President.

FIGURE 2. Millard Fillmore.



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

Millard Fillmore despised Republicans as threats to the Union he loved and had once helped to preserve (by supporting the Compromise of 1850). In the secession crisis, he felt that the burden lay upon Republicans to give "some assurance . . . that they, . . . are ready and willing to . . . repeal all unconstitutional state laws; live up to the compromises of the Constitution, and . . . treat our Southern brethren as friends." Nevertheless, he disagreed with the cautious policy of lame-duck President James Buchanan, who felt that the government had no authority to "coerce a state." The men who passed ordinances of secession, Fillmore argued, should be "regarded as an unauthorized assembly of men conspiring to commit treason, and as such liable to be punished like any other unlawful assembly engaged in the same business."

Though no one knows how Fillmore voted in 1860, it is doubtful that he voted for Lincoln. It seemed awkward, there-

fore, when Fillmore was Lincoln's official host during his stay in Buffalo, New York, on the way to Washington for the inaugural ceremonies. Fillmore took him to the First Unitarian Church in the morning and at night to a meeting in behalf of Indians, but no one knows what they talked about.

When war broke out in April, Fillmore rallied quickly to the colors. Four days after the fall of Fort Sumter, the ex-President was speaking to a mass Union rally in Buffalo, saying that it was "no time now to inquire by whose fault or folly this state of things has been produced;" it was time for "every man to stand to his post, and . . . let posterity . . . find our skeleton and armor on the spot where duty required us to stand." He gave five hundred dollars for the support of families of volunteers and soon organized the Union Continentals, a company of men too old to fight. Enrolling Buffalo's older men of sub-

stance in the Union cause, the Continentals dressed in colorful uniforms, provided escorts for ceremonial and patriotic occasions, and provided leverage for procuring donations for the Union cause. Fearing British invasion through Canada to aid the Confederacy, Fillmore hounded the government to provide arms and men to protect the Niagara frontier.

Suddenly in February of 1864, Fillmore performed an abrupt about-face. In the opening address for the Great Central Fair of the Ladies Christian Commission in Buffalo, Fillmore rehearsed a catalogue of war-induced suffering and announced that "lasting peace" would come only when much was "forgiven, if not forgotten." When the war ended, the United States should restore the South "to all their rights under the Constitution." Republicans were outraged. The ex-President had turned a nonpartisan patriotic rally into a veiled criticism of the administration's conduct of the war.

Personally, Fillmore felt that the country was "on the verge of ruin." Without a change in the administration, he said, "we must soon end in national bankruptcy and military despotism." The ex-President, once a Whig and a Know-Nothing, endorsed Democrat George B. McClellan for the Presidency in 1864.

After Lincoln's assassination, Fillmore led the delegation which met the President's funeral train and escorted it to Buffalo. This did not expunge from Republican's memories Fillmore's partisan acts of 1864. Nor did it cool his dislike of Republicans. In 1869, he stated that it would be "a blessing to break the ranks of the corrupt proscription radical party, that now curses the country. Could moderate men of both parties unite in forming a new one . . . it would be well."

Among the five living ex-Presidents, none was more hostile to President Lincoln than Franklin Pierce. In 1860, he hoped

that a united Democratic party would choose Southern candidate John C. Breckinridge. The New Hampshire Democrats endorsed Stephen A. Douglas instead, but Pierce went along with the decision, though without enthusiasm. Lincoln's election was, for this Democratic ex-President, a "distinct and unequivocal denial of the coequal rights" of the states. In a letter written on Christmas Eve, 1861, Pierce urged the South to delay action for six months. If the North did not right the wrongs done the South, then she could depart in peace.

It was hoped that all of the ex-Presidents might attend John Tyler's Washington Peace Conference. Pierce declined, saying that "the North have been the first wrong doers and [he had] never been able to see how a successful appeal could be made to the south without first placing [the North] right." After news of Fort Sumter's fall, however, he reconsidered and wrote ex-President Martin Van Buren, suggesting that Van Buren assemble the former Presidents in Philadelphia to resolve the crisis. He spoke in Concord, New Hampshire, urging the citizens "to stand together and uphold the flag." Van Buren declined to call the former Presidents together and suggested that Pierce himself should. The wind went out of the sails of the idea of an ex-Presidents' peace convention.

Soon, Pierce lost his enthusiasm for the war effort. He made a trip in the summer of 1861 to Michigan and Kentucky to visit old political friends. On Christmas Eve, he received a letter from Secretary of State William H. Seward, then in charge of the administration's political arrests, enclosing a letter from an anonymous source which accused Pierce of making his trip to promote membership in the Knights of the Golden Circle, "a secret league" whose object was "to overthrow the Government." Seward unceremoniously demanded an explanation from the former President of the United States. Pierce indignantly denied the charge, Seward quickly apologized, and it was soon discovered that Seward had fallen for a hoax. An opponent of the Republicans had written the letter to show how far the Republicans would go in their policy of crying "treason" at the slightest provocation.

Pierce sank into despair. He loathed the proscription of civil liberties in the North, detested emancipation, and saw the Lincoln administration as a despotic reign. The killing of white men for the sake of freeing black men was beyond his comprehension. He thought Lincoln a man of "limited ability and narrow intelligence" who was the mere tool of the abolitionists. He stopped short of endorsing the Southern cause. Old friends avoided him, but Pierce swore never to "justify, sustain, or in any way or to any extent uphold this cruel, heartless, aimless unnecessary war."

At a rally in Concord on July 4, 1863, Pierce courted martyrdom. "True it is," he said, "that I may be the next victim of unconstitutional, arbitrary, irresponsible power." He called efforts to maintain the Union by force of arms "futile" and said that only through "peaceful agencies" could it be saved. Pamphlets compared Pierce to Benedict Arnold, but he persisted and urged the Democratic party to adopt a platform in 1864 calling for restoring the Union by ceasing to fight. Republicans did not forget his actions. New Hampshire provided no public recognition of her son's public career for fifty years after the war.

Martin Van Buren, alone among the ex-Presidents, gave the Lincoln administration unwavering support. He refused Pierce's invitation to organize a meeting of ex-Presidents out of a desire not to be associated with James Buchanan, whose course during the secession crisis Van Buren despised. He had confidence in Lincoln, based probably on information he received from the Blair family, Montgomery Blair being a Republican and a member of Lincoln's cabinet.

There was no more interesting course pursued by an ex-President than James Buchanan's. He had more reason than any other to feel directly antagonistic to the Lincoln administration. Like Pierce, Buchanan had been accused by Lincoln in 1858 of conspiring with Stephen A. Douglas and Roger B. Taney to nationalize slavery in the United States. As Lincoln's immediate predecessor in the office, Buchanan had succeeded in his goal of avoiding war with the South until the new administration came in. The price of this success was the popular imputation of blame on the weak and vacillating course of the Buchanan administration for not nipping seces-

sion in the bud. It was commonly asserted that Buchanan conspired with secessionists to let the South out of the Union. Lincoln's Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin, for example, felt that the Buchanan administration "connives at acts of treason at the South." Despite the findings of a Congressional investigation, many persisted in the belief that the administration had allowed a disproportionate share of arms to flow to Southern arsenals and a dangerously large amount of money to remain in Southern mints. When war broke out, feelings were so strong against Buchanan that he required a guard from the local Masonic Lodge in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to protect his home, Wheatland, from vandalism and himself from personal injury. President Lincoln did not help Buchanan's plight when, in his message of July 4, 1861, he charged that he found the following upon entering office: a "disproportionate share, of the Federal muskets and rifles" in Southern armories, money in Southern mints, the "Navy . . . scattered in distant seas," and Fort Pickens incapable of reinforcement because of "some quasi armistice of the late administration."

Such charges rankled Buchanan, and he spent much of the war years in a careful but quiet attempt to amass documentation which would refute the charges. By late 1862, he had written a book which accomplished this task (to his satisfaction, at least), but he delayed publication until 1866 "to avoid the possible imputation . . . that any portion of it was intended to embarrass Mr. Lincoln's administration." Buchanan's friend Jeremiah Black had doubted that Buchanan could defend his own administration without attacking Lincoln's:

It is vain to think that the two administrations can be made consistent. The fire upon the Star of the West was as bad as the fire on Fort Sumter; and the taking of Fort Moultrie & Pinckney was worse than either. If this war is right and politic and wise and constitutional, I cannot but think you ought to have made it.

Despite the many reasons for which Buchanan might have opposed the Lincoln administration, the ex-President did not. As far as he was concerned, the seceding states "chose to commence civil war, & Mr. Lincoln had no alternative but to defend the country against dismemberment. I certainly should have done the same thing had they begun the war in my time, & this they well knew." Buchanan did not think the war unconstitutional, and he repeatedly told Democrats that it was futile to demand peace proposals. He also supported the draft.

Buchanan considered it too late in 1864 for the Democrats to argue that Lincoln had changed the war's aims. He was pleased to see that McClellan, the Democratic candidate, thought so too. Lincoln's victory in the election, which Buchanan equated with the dubious honor of winning an elephant, caused Buchanan to think that the President should give a "frank and manly offer to the Confederates that they might return to the Union just as they were before." The ex-President's political views were as clearly nostalgic and indifferent to emancipation as those of any Democrat, but he was not among those Democrats who criticized the war or the measures Lincoln used to fight it.

Buchanan spoke of Lincoln in complimentary language. He thought him "a man of honest heart & true manly feelings." Lincoln was "patriotic," and Buchanan deemed his assassination "a terrible misfortune." The two men had met twice when Lincoln came to Washington to assume the Presidency, and Buchanan recalled the meetings fondly, remembering Lincoln's "kindly and benevolent heart and . . . plain, sincere and frank manners." When the Lincoln funeral train passed through Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Buchanan watched it from his buggy.

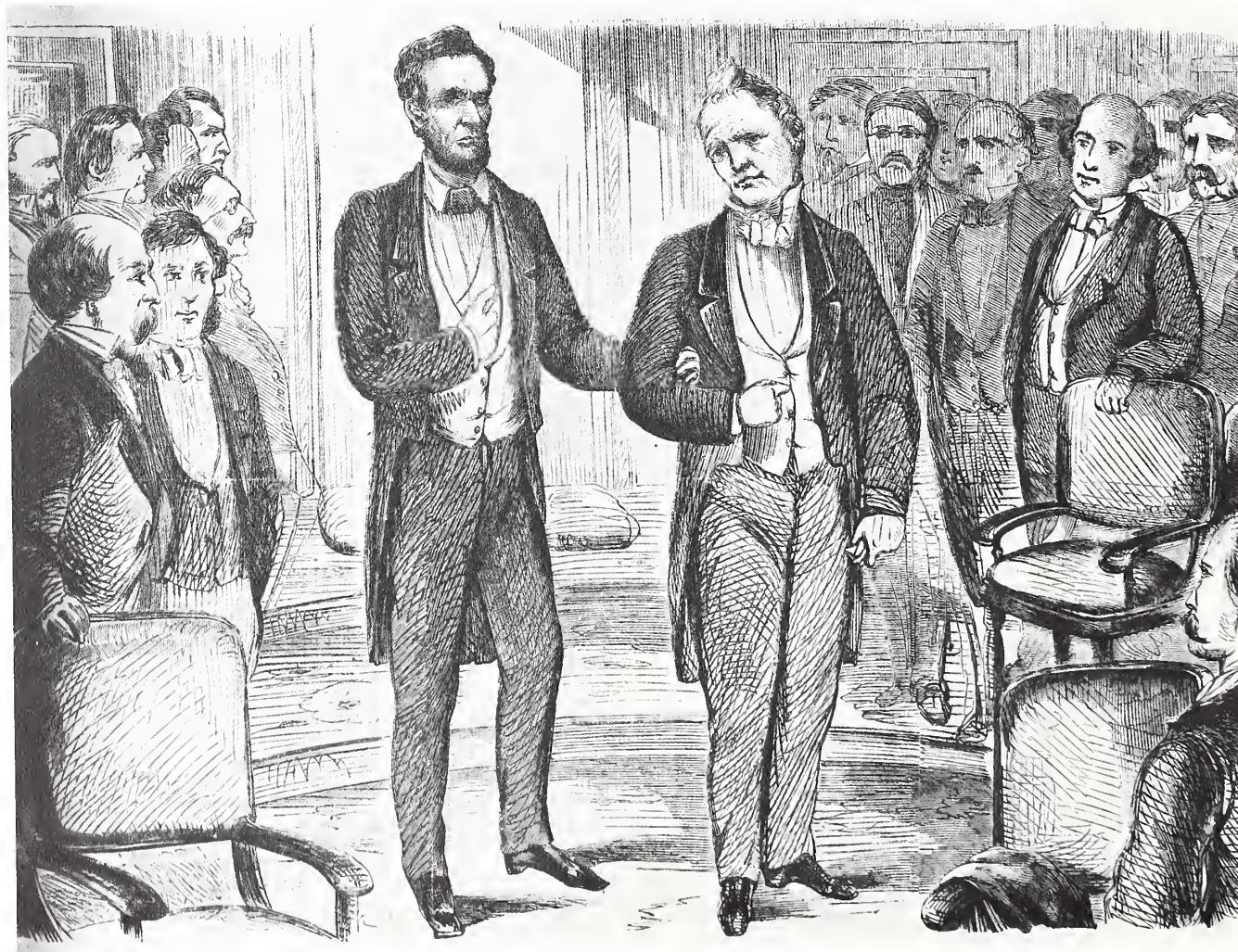
The ex-Presidents benefitted from the Revisionism of historians like James G. Randall. It was their work which rectified the generations-old charge that Buchanan trifled with treason. In some cases, however, this has been a distorting force. Randall's *Lincoln the President: Midstream* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1952) gives the reader an extremely sympathetic portrait of Franklin Pierce in keeping with Randall's view that most Democrats more truly represented Lincoln's views than his fellow Republicans. Thus Pierce appears as the victim of Seward's misguided zeal in the affair of the Knights of

the Golden Circle hoax and, in a particularly touching moment, as the friendly consoler of a bereaved father in the White House. In a horrible train accident immediately before entering the Presidency, Pierce and his wife had witnessed the death of their young son mangled in the wreckage of their car. Therefore, when Willie Lincoln died in 1862, ex-President Pierce sent a letter offering condolences. This is all one learns of Franklin Pierce in Randall's volumes on Lincoln's administration. It is useful to know of his partisan opposition to Lincoln and the war as well, and it in no way detracts from the magnanimity of his letter of condolence. If anything, it serves to highlight the personal depth of feeling Pierce must have felt for the Lincolns in their time of personal bereavement; it allows us even better to appreciate him as a man as well as a politician.

It is easy to forget that Presidents are men. This look at the ex-Presidents of Lincoln's day is a reminder that these men retained their personal and partisan views of the world. It would be hard to imagine an ex-President's club. Van Buren would have nothing to do with Buchanan, though both had been Democrats. Van Buren took the popular view that Buchanan was a "doughface" who truckled to the South instead of standing up to it as Andrew Jackson had done during the Nullification crisis. John Tyler remained a Virginian at heart and cast his fortunes with secession and against the country of which he had been President. Franklin Pierce and Millard Fillmore, the one a Democrat and the other a Whig in their prime,

retained a dislike of the Republican party. Fillmore supported the war with vigor but came to despair of the effort through suspicion that the Republican administration mishandled it. Pierce always blamed the war on Republican provocation and came quickly, and not without some provocation from the administration, to oppose the war effort bitterly. Ironically, James Buchanan, who labored under the heaviest burden of charges of Southern sympathies, was the least critical of the administration of any of the ex-Presidents except Martin Van Buren. Critical of Republican war aims like the rest, Buchanan, nevertheless, supported the war effort and maintained a high personal regard for his Presidential successor. Buchanan thus approached the twentieth-century ideal of an elder statesman.

Editor's Note: The Presidents of Lincoln's era have been rather well served by their biographers. Two splendid examples are Roy F. Nichols's *Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958) and Philip Shriver Klein's *President James Buchanan: A Biography* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962). Robert J. Rayback's *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President* (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1959) and Robert Seager, II's *And Tyler Too: A Biography of John & Julia Gardiner Tyler* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) are useful. There is no careful study of Martin Van Buren's later life. The sketches of these Presidents here are based on these volumes.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Lincoln and Buchanan did not meet again after this day.



Lincoln Lore

September, 1978

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1687

A "Great Fraud"? Politics in Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois*

Thirty years ago, historians thought Lincoln was most a statesman when he was least a man of party. In general, this meant that Lincoln the President was a statesman, but Lincoln the Whig politician was not. In the period from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, some historians celebrated the practical, compromising politician as the ideal statesman, and for this brief period Lincoln was often pictured as a statesman *because* he was a skilful politician. This new view never redounded to the benefit of Lincoln's Whig years, though David Donald argued in 1959 that President Lincoln was merely a "Whig in the White House." The new appreciation for politicians did not extend to the Whig party, which was of little interest to liberal scholars who regarded its affection for banks and tariffs with disdain.

G.S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* has at last rescued Lincoln's Whig years from the charge of narrow partisanship. But the reasons for the long reign of the view that Lincoln was a petty politician before the White House years have not been adequately explored.

One of the principal reasons is the heavy reliance historians have placed on Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago: S.C. Griggs, 1854). It is an appealing book — a minor classic, in fact — written with economy, full of facts and descriptions nowhere else available, and brutally frank.

It is Ford's frankness which has had the greatest appeal. The tone of most nineteenth-century memoirs was pious and earnest rather than cynical, and nineteenth-century state histories were generally celebratory in nature. Ford's book, a state history written almost as a memoir by an active participant in much of the era he describes, is remarkable for its candor about

politics. Himself a politician (Ford was the Governor of Illinois from 1842 to 1846), he viewed the motives of most politicians with cynicism and spoke with the authoritative tone of an insider. Historians anxious for a reliable source which pierced through the customary platitudes and moralisms of nineteenth-century historical writing have devoured Ford's book.

For the early period of Lincoln's involvement with Illinois politics, Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois* is one of the most important sources. It is quoted by everyone. Even Lincoln quoted from it. In the first of his famous debates with Stephen Douglas, at Ottawa on August 21, 1858, Lincoln argued that his opponent had not always bowed to the will of the Supreme Court as readily as he bowed to its will as expressed in the Dred Scott decision.

And I remind him of another piece of history on the question of respect for judicial decisions, and it is a piece of Illinois history, belonging to a time when the large party to which Judge Douglas belonged, were displeased with a decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois, because they had decided that a Governor could not remove a Secretary of State. You will find the whole story in Ford's *History of Illinois*, and I know that Judge Douglas will not deny that he was then in favor of over- slaughting that decision by the mode of adding five new Judges, so as to vote down the four old ones. Not only so, but it ended in the *Judge's sitting down on that very bench as one of the five new Judges to break down the four old ones.*

Again, when Lincoln met Douglas at Charleston on September 18th, a heckler asked Lincoln, who was defending Lyman Trumbull's reputation, what Ford's book said about him. Lincoln re-

HISTORY OF ILLINOIS.

FROM ITS

COMMENCEMENT AS A STATE IN 1818 TO 1847.

CONTAINING A

FULL ACCOUNT OF THE BLACK HAWK WAR, THE RISE, PROGRESS,
AND FALL OF MORMONISM, THE ALTON AND LOVEJOY RIOTS,
AND OTHER IMPORTANT AND INTERESING EVENTS.

BY THE LATE

GOV. THOMAS FORD.

CHICAGO :

PUBLISHED BY S. C. GRIGGS & CO.,

111 LAKE STREET.

NEW YORK: IVISON & PHINNEY.

1854.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Title page of Ford's *History of Illinois*.

plied: "My own recollection is, that Ford speaks of Trumbull in very disrespectful terms in several portions of his book, and that he talks a great deal worse of Judge Douglas."

Ford's *History of Illinois* has played an important role in documenting Lincoln's career. It is one of the principal sources for the charge that, as a member of Sangamon County's "Long Nine," Lincoln had traded support for local internal improvements for votes to move the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. The book barely mentions Lincoln, however, and its real importance has lain in providing a picture of the political landscape of Lincoln's early career.

A good example of the book's use appears in the first volume of J.G. Randall's *Lincoln the President*:

The politicians' world in Illinois in the day of Lincoln's earlier career has been drawn from life in the vivid pages of Governor Thomas Ford. It was not an inspiring picture. Because of the want of true "issues" and the scramble for favor, as explained by Ford, an election became "one great fraud, in which honor, faith, and truth were . . . sacrificed, and politicians were debased below the . . . popular idea of that class of men." Government might mean one thing to the people; its purpose in the minds of politicians was another matter. They had a "destiny to accomplish, not for the people, but for themselves." With the people caring little for matters of government, said Ford, the "politicians took advantage of this lethargic state of indifference . . . to advance their own projects, to get offices and special favors from the legislature, which were all they busied their heads about." Politicians, he said, operated on the principle that "the people never blame any one for misleading them"; it

was merely a matter of supporting or opposing measures because of their popularity or unpopularity at the time. A "public man," said the governor, "will scarcely ever be forgiven for being right when the people are wrong." That was why "so many" politicians were "ready to prostitute their better judgments to catch the popular breeze." Whatever may have been the basis of parties in their early origin, Ford observed that "little big men, on both sides . . . feel the most thorough hatred for each other; their malice often supplying the place of principle and patriotism. They think they are devoted to a cause, when they only hate an opponent; and the more thoroughly they hate, the more . . . are they partisans." Party newspapers, he thought, promoted and perpetuated this unhealthy state of things.

Ford's candor about political motivation and his seeming nonpartisanship ("little big men" were "on both sides") persuaded many a student of Illinois history that politics were a sordid affair. Since Lincoln's life was thoroughly and inextricably enmeshed with Illinois politics, the result was that historians found in him, perhaps in less exaggerated form, the general attributes of Illinois politicians outlined by Thomas Ford.

The bitterness of Ford's disgust for politics and politicians was extraordinary and was not misrepresented by Randall and other Lincoln biographers who saw Lincoln's early political career as narrowly partisan and crafty. Ford introduces his theme in his discussion of the first Illinois legislature early in the book. "It appears," he said, "by the journals of this first legislature that a committee was appointed to contract for stationery, who reported that they had purchased a



OUR PRESIDENTIAL MERRYMAN.

The Presidential party was engaged in a lively exchange of wit and humor. The President Elect was the merriest among the merry, kept those around him in a continual roar."—*Daily Paper*.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Harper's *Weekly* pictured Lincoln swapping stories with drinking politicians, as a hearse carrying the Union and the Constitution passed by.



FIGURE 3. Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* pictured the crowd of office-seekers who besieged Lincoln when his administration began.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

sufficient stock at the cost of \$13[.]50. For every dollar then paid, we now pay hundreds for the same articles; but this was in the days of real frugality and economy, and before any of the members had learned the gentlemanly art of laying in, from the public stock, a year or two's supply at home." Surveying the state's political history up to 1830, and "calling to mind the prominent actors in the scenes of that day, the fierce struggles and quarrels amongst them, the loves and the hatreds, the hopes, fears, successes and disappointments of men, recently, but now no more on the stage of action, one cannot but be struck with the utter nothingness of mere contests for office." The old and corrupt methods of politics were carried into the new state. "In those days," Ford said, "the people drank vast quantities of whiskey and other liquors; and the dispensation of liquors, or 'treating,' as it was called, by candidates for office, was an indispensable element of success at elections." The personal politics, intrigue, and disregard of the public welfare practiced in gaining election "were carried . . . into the legislature. Almost everything there was done from personal motives." Ford's message was simple: "Hitherto in Illinois the race of politicians has been more numerous and more popular with the people, than the race of statesmen."

Though Ford's views are exceptional for their disdain for the methods of politics, they have the ring of authenticity because of their lack of partisan flavor. Denunciations of politics and politicians in the nineteenth century were common, but they came most often as denunciations of the practices and practitioners of the opposite party. Ford spared almost no one; Democrat and Whig alike fell before his critical scythe.

Though nonpartisan in his criticism of politicians, Ford was nevertheless far from objective. His *History of Illinois* is colored by a prejudice not against any particular party but against parties themselves — or rather, against politics with or without parties. An especially revealing but little-known article on Ford's *History* in "The Illinois Bookshelf" column in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* for March, 1945, explains the reasons for Ford's peculiarly jaundiced views of the ways of politicians. Despite being an elected official himself, Ford's political success was achieved with a minimum of political effort. In 1835 the state legislature elected him circuit judge. In 1837 he became judge of the Chicago municipal court. In 1839 the legislature elected him circuit judge again, and in 1841 he joined the Illinois Supreme Court. In 1842 the Democratic candidate for governor died, and Ford replaced him with only ten weeks remaining before the election. Despite little time for campaigning, he won election in this overwhelmingly Democratic state. Thus, Ford

served as Illinois's governor without much campaigning and without ever having seen the state legislature at work. What he saw when he gained office must have shocked him. Another factor was Ford's long, painful, and losing battle against tuberculosis. He wrote his *History* in order to gain money for his five children, made indigent by his inability to make a living during his illness. The *History* embodies the bitter observations of a dying man. Ford died in 1850, leaving his manuscript with James Shields, who finally found a publisher for it in 1854.

Despite Ford's shock and disdain for politics, when he wrote his *History*, he could think of no better system than the one he had experienced. In fact, one could legitimately read Ford's book as a sober defense of the two-party system and an attack on the sophistication of the electorate. Throughout his *History*, Ford insisted "that, as a general thing, the government will be a type of the people." Whenever he denounced politicians and politics, he qualified his criticism by laying the ultimate blame on the ignorance or indifference of the people who elected them.

Likewise, when he criticized the political system, he often noted that the alternatives to it were far inferior. Discussing the period in Illinois before the emergence of two-party politics, Ford said:

There are those who are apt to believe that this mode of conducting elections [by personal rather than party contests] is likely to result in the choice of the best materials for administering government. . . . The idea of electing men for their merit has an attractive charm in it to generous minds; but in our history it has been as full of delusion as it has been attractive. Nor has the organization of regular parties, and the introduction of the new principle in elections of "measures not men," fully answered the expectation of its friends. But if the introduction of such parties, supposed to be founded on a difference in principles, has done no other good, it has greatly softened and abated the personal rancor and asperity of political contests, though it has made such contests increasing and eternal. It is to be regretted, however, if there be evils attending the contests of party, that society cannot receive the full benefit from them by the total extinction of all mere personal considerations, personal quarrels, and personal crimination, not necessary to exhibit the genius and tendency of a party as to measures, and which are merely incidental to contests for office. The present doctrine of parties is measures, not men, which if truly carried out would lead to a discussion of measures only. But parties are not yet sufficiently organized for this; and, accordingly, we find at every election much personal bitterness and invective mingled with the supposed contests for

principle . . . Perhaps the time may come when all these personal contests will be confined to the bosom of one party, in selecting the best candidates to carry out its principles. Ford could thus complain that parties were inadequately organized and denounce a party-less system, the dream of many an elitist critic of American politics.

Ford had no illusions about the workings of party politics; yet he recognized parties as, at worst, a necessary evil. He had a realistic view of party discipline:

The organization of men into political parties under the control of leaders as a means of government, necessarily destroys individuality of character and freedom of opinion. Government implies restraint, compulsion of either the body or mind, or both. The latest improvement to effect this restraint and compulsion is to use moral means, intellectual means operating on the mind instead of the old mode of using force, such as standing armies, fire, sword and the gibbet, to control the mere bodies of men. It is therefore a very common thing for men of all parties to make very great sacrifices of opinion, so as to bring themselves into conformity with the bulk of their party. And yet there is nothing more common than for the race of newspaper statesmen to denounce all such of the opposite party as yield their own opinions to the opinions of the majority, as truckling and servile. They may possibly be right in this. But undoubtedly such submission is often necessary to the existence of majorities, entertaining the same opinion. A little further experience may develop the fact, that when this means of securing majorities shall fail, the government will fall into anarchy.

Unlike many critics of politics and parties, Ford had no fear of majority will. His basic complaint was that majorities were poorly formed and represented, and that bipartisan measures frustrated any responsibility of politician or party to people. His criticism of the Internal Improvements Act of 1837, often pointed to as a glaring example of Lincoln's narrow Whig partisanship, was that it was advocated and passed as a bipartisan measure for the good of the whole state. "The vote in the legislature was not a party vote," said Ford, and

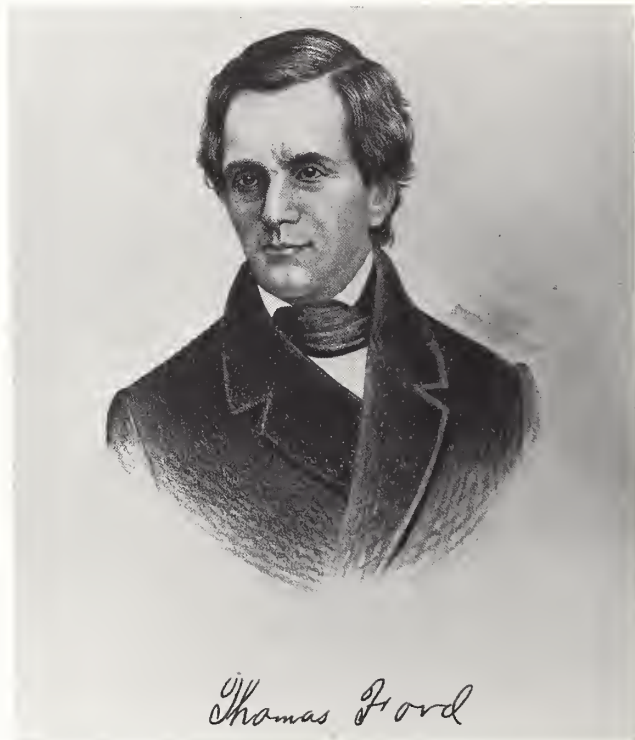
the banks were advocated and supported upon grounds of public utility and expediency; and like on the vote upon the internal improvement system, which followed at the next session, both whigs and democrats were earnestly invited to lay party feelings aside, and all go, at least once, for the good of the country. Whenever I have heard this cry since, I have always suspected that some great mischief was to be done, for which no party desired to be responsible to the people. As majorities have the power, so it is their duty to carry on the government. The majority, as long as parties are necessary in a free government, ought never to divide, and a portion of it join temporarily with the minority. It should always have the wisdom and courage to adopt all the measures necessary for good government. As a general thing, if the minority is anything more than a faction, if it has any principles, and is true to them, it will rally an opposition to all that is done by the majority; and even if it is convinced that the measures of the majority are right, it is safest for the minority to compel the majority to take the undivided responsibility of government. By this means there will always be a party to expose the faults and blunders of our rulers; and the majority will be more careful what they do.

Here Ford advocated the ultimate in the partisan ideal, the benefits of opposition to one party's program even when it seems to be a very proper program. This plea for disciplined, but responsible majorities looked forward to the proposals to institute in America cabinet government on the British model, proposals which were widely put forward towards the end of the nineteenth century.

As a theoretical commentator on the nature of party politics, Ford was unusual in his thoroughgoing defense of disciplined party majorities. In other respects, of course, he was a typical Democrat of his era. He thought that "no farmer ought ever to borrow money to carry on his farm." He blamed the internal improvements mania on "the general desire of sudden and unwarrantable gain; a dissatisfaction with the slow but sure profits of industry and lawful commerce, produced a general phrenzy." His ideal political system looked back to the storybook democracy of the early New England town:

My own opinion of the convention system is, that it can never be perfect in Illinois, without the organization of little township democracies, such as are found in New York and New England; that in a State where the people are highly intelligent, and not indifferent to public affairs, it will enable the people themselves to govern, by giving full effect to the will of the majority; but among a people who are either ignorant or indifferent to the affairs of their government, the convention system is a most admirable contrivance to enable active leaders to govern without much responsibility to the people.

Thomas Ford's very good book has been used to very bad effect. Historians have used its strictures on the unsavory motives and methods of politicians to criticize political parties; yet Ford was himself a staunch defender of party politics. The book has been mined by historians but generally misread by them. Showing almost a tenderfoot's pique at the methods of state legislators, Ford has been seen as an unimpassioned and objective observer of party politics. The book should be used carefully by students of Lincoln's early political career, but it should be used. It deserves a better fate than historians have thus far allowed it.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Thomas Ford as pictured in the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Sangamon County, Illinois*.



Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

May, 1979

Number 1695

LINCOLN AND WASHBURNE

Though historians have praised President Lincoln's skilled handling of Congress, their discussions of the subject are usually confined to the Cabinet crisis of 1862 and to his abilities to handle difficult personalities like Charles Sumner's. The President's relations with the House of Representatives have been little explored. The tendency to think of Lincoln as a "Whig in the White House," to borrow the language of David Donald's famous essay on Lincoln's theory of the Presidency, reinforces the lack of interest in this question. The Whig theory of the Presidency, after all, dictated that the President simply enforce the will of Congress, use the veto sparingly, and — as Lincoln explained the theory in the election of 1848 — not even force a party platform on the country. A President following such a policy would not "handle" Congress at all. The best student of the Civil War Congress, Leonard P. Curry, concludes that Congress made considerable inroads on executive power during Lincoln's Presidency, though there was nothing like the achievement of Congressional dominance that would come in the Johnson years that followed the Civil War.

Whether this view of the decline of executive power *vis-a-vis* Congress in the Civil War years is true or not, its effect has been to stifle curiosity about Lincoln's friends in Congress. He did have friends there, and two notable examples were Isaac N. Arnold and Elihu B. Washburne. Arnold was not only a great partisan of Lincoln's cause but also an early Lincoln biographer. Yet it is almost impossible to find published material on this Illinois Congressman.

Elihu B. Washburne, if he had a less direct relationship with Lincoln than Arnold, had a longer and more significant career in Congress, and he was close enough to President Lincoln to merit considerable attention.

Washburne was born in Maine in 1816. He was named Elihu Benjamin Washburn but added an "e" to his last name in order to revert to what he thought was the proper spelling of the name among his English ancestors. This has caused some confusion because he had two brothers, Cadwallader and Israel Washburn, who also became prominent in American politics. Although they did not spell their last names identically, these three brothers became a powerful force in American politics. In fact, the Wash-

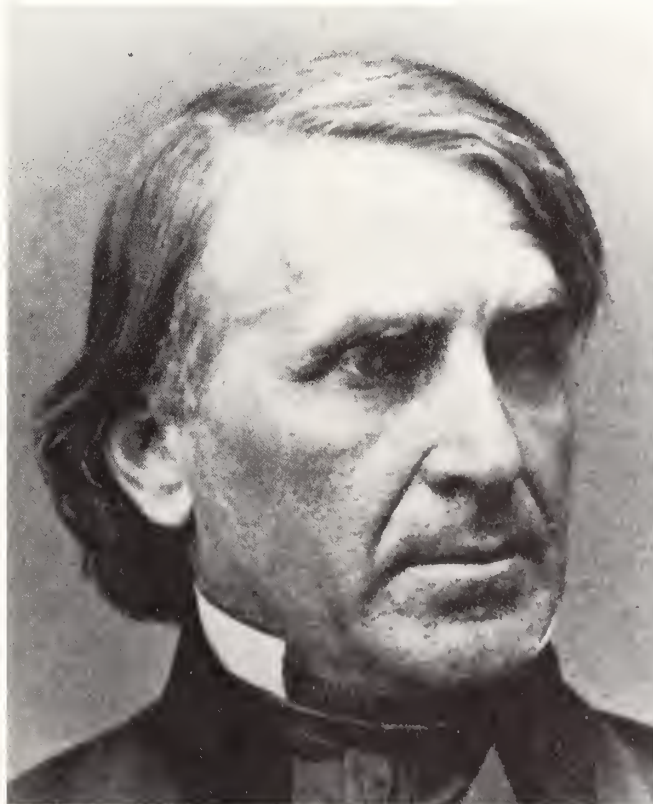
burns hold the distinction of being the only family to have three brothers in the same Congress representing three different states.

After various attempts to find a career, Washburne attended the Harvard Law School, became a member of the Massachusetts bar, and moved to the Illinois lead-mining boomtown of Galena in 1840. A Henry Clay Whig, Washburne met Lincoln the very year he moved to Galena. It was the year of the great log cabin campaign for William Henry Harrison. Their closest association, however, came at the time of the formation of the Republican party and after.

Washburne was elected to the first of eight consecutive terms in the United States House of Representatives in 1852. He was then still a Whig, but he was among the earliest converts to the Republican cause. As early as November of 1854, he could boast to Lincoln that every representative and senator sent to the state legislature from his northern Illinois district was a Republican, and this was almost two years before Lincoln would embrace that new party label. Washburne shared with Lincoln an animosity to the Know-Nothing party, which was at the time the principal competitor of the

Republicans for anti-Democratic voters. In 1854, for example, he helped carry an amendment to the homestead law which allowed those aliens who had declared their intention to become American citizens to acquire public lands in the same way full-fledged citizens did.

Washburne was a staunch supporter of Lincoln's drive to win a seat in the United States Senate in 1855. He and his friends saw every member of the state legislature from his district (the state legislatures still chose the United States Senators), and he told Lincoln how each man was leaning. He warned the candidate: "We are pretty ultra on the slave question . . . and you will have to take pretty high ground." Washburne worked to gain Free Soil support for Lincoln. He suggested that Lincoln write a letter describing his positions on the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, the admission of new slave states, and other aspects of the great slavery question which Washburne thought would override all others. He offered to show the letter to Salmon Chase and to get Chase to write Free Soilers in Illinois



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Elihu B. Washburne.

on Lincoln's behalf. Washburne himself saw Joshua Giddings, found him to be Lincoln's "strongest possible friend," and reported Giddings's willingness to "walk clear to Illinois to elect" Lincoln. Giddings wrote Illinois's most successful radical antislavery politician, Owen Lovejoy, twice to urge support for Lincoln's candidacy.

Washburne was an experienced politician, and, when he saw trouble brewing, he reported it. He told Lincoln of one influential friend in his district who opposed Lincoln's candidacy because Springfield's political influence had always been used against the interests of the northern part of the state. Thus an astonished Lincoln had to deal with the perennial sectionalism that plagued Illinois politics. "For a Senator to be the impartial representative of his whole State," Lincoln thundered in his reply, "is so plain a duty, that I pledge myself to the observance of it without hesitation; but not without some mortification that any one should suspect me of an inclination to the contrary." For eight years a Representative of Sangamon County in the legislature, Lincoln, "in a conflict of interests between that and other counties," would have felt a "duty to stick to Old Sangamon," but he could not recall any such conflict with members from the northern part of the state. He could recollect only "co-operating on measures of policy." The Illinois-Michigan Canal "was then the great Northern measure, and it, from first to last, had our votes as readily as the votes of the North itself."

Washburne had the politician's gift for turning a man's trouble to party advantage. One member of the legislature, Wait Talcott, was "in the biggest kind of a lawsuit for an alleged infringement of a patent." Washburne advised Talcott's agent to seek Lincoln's services in the case. If Talcott did so, Washburne was sure it would "be a good pull on him" to support Lincoln for Senator.

Washburne's and Lincoln's efforts failed in 1855, of course, and in 1858, when Lincoln tried again to reach the Senate, Washburne was again in Lincoln's camp. But now there was a complicating factor. Although Washburne was an early and dedicated Republican, he felt keenly that the party was "not so large but what it will hold a few more." He supported Lincoln's candidacy, but he had expressed a hope that Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's opponent, might become a Republican. Douglas had broken with the Democratic Buchanan administration over Kansas policy, and Washburne for a time thought the break decisive for Douglas's future loyalties. Lincoln, on the other hand, was nervous about talk from Eastern Republicans that the party in Illinois ought to let Douglas retain his seat unopposed. He did not trust Douglas, and this strategy would squeeze Lincoln out of any hopes for a Senate seat. Rumors of Washburne's shaky position on the Senate contest made Lincoln's supporters anxious. On April 28, 1858, Washburne told William Herndon that he could not "see the wisdom of abusing" Douglas, "as matters stand now." Four days later he was writing Lincoln much the same thing, explaining, though, that he "had no idea of making him Senator or making him a leader." As for the "idea . . . industriously circulated in our State, that the republicans outside the State were wanting to sell us out in Illinois," Washburne assured Lincoln from his Washington vantage point that "such stuff ought not to be believed for a moment." On May 15th Lincoln expressed himself as "quite satisfied" that Washburne had done no wrong. He was willing "that the matter may drop." By May 31st Washburne was reporting that Douglas had "ceased associating with our folks, but is very thick with the other side. He is understood to repudiate all sympathy with republicans and desires no support from them."

Washburne found Lincoln's Presidential nomination in 1860 "so unexpected we could hardly believe it," but, as a member of the Republican Executive Congressional Committee for the campaign, he promised to "devote my whole soul and energies to the campaign." Interestingly enough, he reported that Stephen Douglas thought the choice of Lincoln "the strongest that could have been made." Like many others, Congressman Washburne immediately advised the candidate to "keep very quiet and out of the way as much as possible."

Washburne's residence in the Capital made him an especially valuable reporter for Lincoln. In May he informed the candidate that "Pennsylvanians of American [i.e., Know-Nothing] proclivities are some what troubled" by the planks in the Republican platform which affirmed the rights of immigrants. They had appealed to Washburne to suggest that

Lincoln's letter accepting the nomination "say nothing about the platform, so they can support you without committing themselves to those planks." Washburne asserted that "we must have" the American element in that state; he thought the request "worth considering." Lincoln ignored the advice.

In Congress, Washburne was more a doer than an orator, but on May 29th he delivered a speech, later widely reprinted as *Abraham Lincoln, His Personal History and Public Record*. Washburne admitted that it "was hastily got up," but he thought it "necessary . . . that your record while in Congress should be brought out in answer to the misrepresentations already made." A full page of the eight-page pamphlet explained that Lincoln voted in favor of supplies and land bounties for soldiers even though he opposed the Mexican War. The Republican Congressional Committee printed the speech and made it available for fifty cents per hundred. Copies of it were among the 40,000 speeches and documents (on the average) which the Committee distributed at the height of the campaign in the fall (the documents were franked by the Congress's free-mailing privilege, a form of Federal funding of election campaigns in Lincoln's day). The Committee was inexhaustible in its attentions to voters. One of Washburne's letters introduced Lincoln to one H.P. Scholte, an Iowan of Dutch descent, who had been in Washington translating Republican campaign materials into Dutch.

As election day approached, Washburne, who adhered to the philosophy that "there is no telling who will be governor

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, His Personal History and Public Record.

SPEECH

OF

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE, OF ILLINOIS.

Delivered in the U. S. House of Representatives, May 29, 1860.

The House, being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. WASHBURNE, of Illinois, said:
Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Republican party, through its proper organization, has placed in nomination for President of the United States, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, of Illinois. The people, who will be called upon to pass upon that nomination, have a right to inquire into the life, the character, and the political opinions, of the man who is commended to their suffrages for the highest office in their gift. The State which I in part represent on this floor, having been honored by this nomination, I come here to-day to speak of the personal and political history of the candidate. I have known Mr. Lincoln well for twenty years. I have known him in private life, I have known him at the bar, and have been associated with him in every political contest in our State since the advent of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," in 1840. While I may speak with the accents of a strong personal friendship, I shall speak with the frankness of conscious truth, and, I trust, without exaggeration.

Springing from the humblest ranks in life, and unaided by the adventitious supports of family or wealth, Mr. Lincoln has reached his present exalted position by the strength of his will, the power of his intellect, and the honesty of his heart. He was born in Hardin county, Kentucky, February 12, 1809; his family removed to Spencer county, Indiana, in 1816, where he passed his boyhood amid the roughest hardships and the most trying experiences of a frontier life. Without schools, and almost without books, he spent his time amid the wild and romantic scenes of the border, alleviating the hard labors of the farm by the sport of the huntsman. Of fine physical development, with a vigorous intellect, quick intelligence, ready wit, and genial character, he gave early evidences of the superiority he has since attained. His first advent into the great world, from the comparative seclusion of his frontier home, was down the Wabash and

Ohio rivers in charge of a flat-boat, of a class known to all the old river men of the West as "broad-jaws." These boats, laden with the productions of the farmers, floated down stream until a market was found for the cargo; and when that was disposed of, the boat itself was sold, and those in charge made their way back, in the best manner they could, to their homes. A great many persons have heard Mr. Lincoln relate, with inimitable effect, the anecdotes of his experience of that portion of his life.

In 1830, Mr. Lincoln emigrated to that State, with which his great name has now become historically connected. He passed the first year in Macon county, and actively labored on a farm, where he and a fellow-laborer, by the name of John Hanks, split three thousand rails. This portion of the history of Mr. Lincoln's life gave rise to the incident in the late Republican State Convention at Decatur, in Macon county, which awakened the intensest enthusiasm of that vast concourse of citizens from all parts of the State. Mr. Lincoln was present as a spectator in that Convention, and was invited to take a seat upon the platform. When he had taken his seat, it was announced to the Convention that John Hanks, an old Democrat, who had grown gray in the service of that party, desired to make a contribution to the Convention; and the offer being accepted, forthwith two old-time fence rails, decorated with flags and streamers, were borne through the crowd into the Convention, bearing the inscription:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
THE RAIL CANDIDATE
FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860.
Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in
1830 by John Hanks and Abe Lincoln.

The effect was electrical. One spontaneous burst of applause went up from all parts of the "wigwam." Of course, Mr. Lincoln was called out, and made an explanation of the matter. He

PUBLISHED BY THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE. PRICE 50 CENTS PER HUNDRED.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. This Dutch translation of Lincoln's Cooper Institute Address, perhaps the work of F. P. Scholte, was an 1860 campaign document. It is the only Dutch title listed for 1860 in Jay Monaghan's *Lincoln Bibliography*, 1839-1939.

Start bill May 13 1903 NO 1

De Republikeinsche Party verdedigd enz.

REDEVOERING

VAN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

IN HET COOPER INSTITUUT. FEBRUARY 27, 1860.

Mr. President en Mededruagers van New York.

De daadzaken waarmede ik my deelen avond zal bezig houden zijn meermal out en bekend, ook is er niets nieuws in het gebruik dat ik er van zal maken. Indien er eenige nieuwheid in is, het zal zijn de manier om de daadzaken te voorstellen, en de gevolgtrekkingen en opmerkingen die uit deze voorstelling voortvloeien.

Senator Douglas zeide, in zijne redevoering laatste herfst, te Columbus, in Ohio, als opgegeven in de "Nieuw York Times."

"Onze vaders, toen zy het Gouvernement vormden waaronder wy leven, verstonden dit vraagstuk juist zoo goed, en zelfs beter als wy tegenwoordig doen."

Ik steun dit ten volle toe, en neem het aan als een tekst voor deze redevoering. Ik doe dit omdat het een juist en door beiden erkend aanvangpunt levert voor eene verhandeling der Republikeinen en die vleugel van de Democratie aangevoerd door Senator Douglas. Het laat eenvoudig het onderzoek over, "Hoe verstonden die vaders het vermaande vraagstuk?"

Wat is het grondwerk van het Gouvernement waaronder wy leven? Het antwoord moet zijn: "De Constitutie der Verenigde Staten." Die Constitutie bestaat uit de oorspronkelijke, opgesteld in 1787 (en waaronder het tegenwoordige Gouvernement het eerst in werking trad), en twaalf daarna gemaakte verbeteringen, waarvan de tien eerste gemaakt werden in 1789.

Wie waren onze vaders die de Constitutie maakten? Ik veronderstel de 39 die het oorspronkelijke stuk tekenden moogen met regt onze vaders genoemd worden die dat gedeelte van ons tegenwoordig Gouvernement ontwierpen. Het is volkomen waar niet alleen dat zy getrouw vertegenwoordigden het denkbeeld en gevoel van het gehele volk ter dier tyd. Hanne algemeen bekende namen behooren nu niet te worden herhaald. Ik neem dan deze 39 voor het tegenwoordig als onze vaders die het Gouvernement ontworpen waaronder wy nu leven. Wat is nu het vraagstuk het welk volgens de tekst, deze vaders juist zoo goed, en zelfs beter verstonden, dan wy nu doen?

Het is dit: "Verdiende een juiste verdeling tusschen plaatselyk en federaal gezag, often in de Constitutie aan ons Gouvernement het beheer in betrekking tot Slaverny in ons Federaal Grondgebied?"

Hierop antwoord Douglas berispend en de Republikeinen ontkennend. Dit vormt het verschil, en dit verschil, dit vraagstuk, is juist dat geene wat de tekst verklaard dat onze

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Washburne's campaign speech for Lincoln.

till after the election," was not overconfident, but he warned Lincoln that he would be "utterly overrun" with office-seekers if he won. And the Illinois Congressman, though "reluctant to be among . . . the crowd," did say that he would like to see Lincoln too. He did so on November 12th and "found Old Abe in fine spirits and excellent health, and quite undisturbed by the blusterings of the disunionists and traitors." When he returned to Washington, Washburne found that "secession feeling has assumed proportions of which I had but a faint conception," and he told Lincoln that "our friends generally in the west are not fully apprised of the imminent peril which now environs us." Washburne expressed Congress's feelings for "conciliation but firmness" and called for "masterly inactivity."

Washburne's hopes rose and fell, but, in general, he sensed that real trouble was brewing. Having had some acquaintance with Winfield Scott when he was the Whig candidate for President in 1852, Washburne was now able to see the old general in Washington and keep Lincoln, who was still in Springfield, in touch with the crisis over Federal forts in the South and later with the security measures for the city and Lincoln's inauguration. He gave Lincoln advice: not to compromise on the platform, to procure a private secretary who would not sell his influence and who knew etiquette and French, and to stay in a private residence in Washington before the inauguration. He opposed Simon Cameron's appointment to the Cabinet vigorously.

Early in January, Washburne became alarmed about a conspiracy to seize the Capital and prevent the inauguration. With William Seward and two other members of Congress, Washburne employed two New York detectives to investigate the rumors of conspiracies. He referred to them in later letters as "our friends from N.Y.," and expressed great fears about

the state of opinion in Baltimore. Washburne's fears calmed late in January but rose again early in February. He was in the end the only man on the platform when Lincoln came into Washington secretly for his inauguration.

Unfortunately for the historian, once Washburne and Lincoln were together in Washington, the correspondence between them decreased in frequency and importance. They no longer had to discuss political matters by mail. As a Congressman, Washburne became the particular champion of fellow Galena townsman Ulysses S. Grant. He saw to everything for General Grant's career from military promotions to the coining of celebratory medals. His loyalty knew no limits. When Grant issued his infamous Order No. 11 banning "Jews, as a class" from the Department of the Tennessee late in 1862, Lincoln eventually received so many protests that he revoked it. Washburne protested Lincoln's revocation, saying that he considered "it the wisest order yet made by a military Command." For a period in 1863, Washburne accompanied Grant on campaigns and gave a wonderful portrait of that colorful and dedicated soldier. His "entire baggage consists of a tooth brush," Washburne said. A thirteen-year-old boy carried the general's sword. He had no servant, no blanket, no overcoat, and no clean shirt.

In Congress, Washburne loyally supported the administration's war effort. His view of the task was simple. As he expressed it after the Battle of Bull Run, "We will whip the traitors yet. Their barbarities towards our wounded will arouse a spirit of vengeance which will not be appeased till their leaders are all hung and their followers are driven into the gulf." He voted with the more zealous Republicans and was a tough man in a floor battle. When Congressmen debated the bill to emancipate slaves in the District of Columbia in the spring of 1862, Washburne knew who had the votes to win: "If gentlemen of the other side offer amendments, let us hear them, and then vote them down." Like fellow Illinois Congressman Isaac Arnold, Washburne was



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Washburne's favorite general, U. S. Grant.

SPEECHES AND DOCUMENTS FOR DISTRIBUTION BY THE UNION CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE.

Abraham Lincoln—"Slavery and its issues indicated by his Speeches, Letters, Messages, and Proclamations." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. Isaac N. Arnold—"Reconstruction; Liberty the corner-stone and Lincoln the architect." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. M. Russell Thayer—"Reconstruction of Rebel States." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. James F. Wilson—"A Free Constitution." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. Godlove S. Orth—"The Expulsion of Long." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. H. Winter Davis—"The Expulsion of Long." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. Henry C. Deming—"State Renovation." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. James A. Garfield—"Confiscation of Rebel Property." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. William D. Kelley—"Freedmen's Affairs." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. Green Clay Smith—"Confiscation of Rebel Property." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. D. W. Gooch—"Secession and Reconstruction." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. E. C. Sehenck—"No Compromise with Treason." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. Lyman Trumbull—"A Free Constitution." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. Charles Sumner—"Universal Emancipation, without Compensation." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. James Harlan—"Title to Property in Slaves." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. Daniel Clark—"Amendment to Constitution." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. John C. Ten Eyck—"Reconstruction in the States." 8 pages; one dollar per hundred.

Hon. Reverdy Johnson—"Amendment to the Constitution." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. J. D. Defrees—"Thoughts for Honest Democrats." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Biographical Sketch of Andrew Johnson, candidate for the Vice Presidency. 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Hon. J. D. Defrees—"The War commenced by the Rebels." 16 pages; two dollars per hundred.

Numerous Speeches and Documents not included in the foregoing will be published for distribution, and persons willing to trust the discretion of the Committee can remit their orders with the money, and have them filled with the utmost promptitude, and with the best judgment as to price and adaptation to the locality where the Speeches are to be sent.

Printed by L. Towers for the Union Congressional Committee.

FIGURE 5. Washburne's committee franked speeches on this list by the thousands in 1864. Washburne did not include a speech of his own on the list, but other members of the committee did. The committee sent circulars and speeches to Republican groups. On the backs of the speeches, they advertised other available speeches. One of these lists is pictured here.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

an ardent supporter of the bill to make the old Illinois and Michigan Canal of Whig days a ship canal connecting the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.

Washburne was among the earliest to seek Lincoln's commitment to run for reelection, asking him to "let some of your confidential friends know your wishes" as early as October of 1863. He was a member of the Union Executive Congressional Committee for the campaign and once again franked thousands of speeches and documents. He even assessed Lincoln's Cabinet members \$250 each for the circulation of documents. He became quite alarmed at the state of opinion in his home state and repeatedly pleaded with the President to furlough Illinois soldiers to vote in the election. He acted as an intermediary with Grant when Lincoln wished to use a letter from Grant for campaign purposes. The general replied to Washburne's inquiry that Lincoln could use "anything I have ever written to him as he sees fit," but added: "I think however for him to attempt to answer all the charges the opposition will bring against him will be like setting a maiden to work to prove her chastity."

Like others of Lincoln's friends in Congress, Washburne is a figure badly in need of a biography. The sketch of his career here is suggestive of his importance and of the illumination such a biography would bring to our understanding of the Sixteenth President.

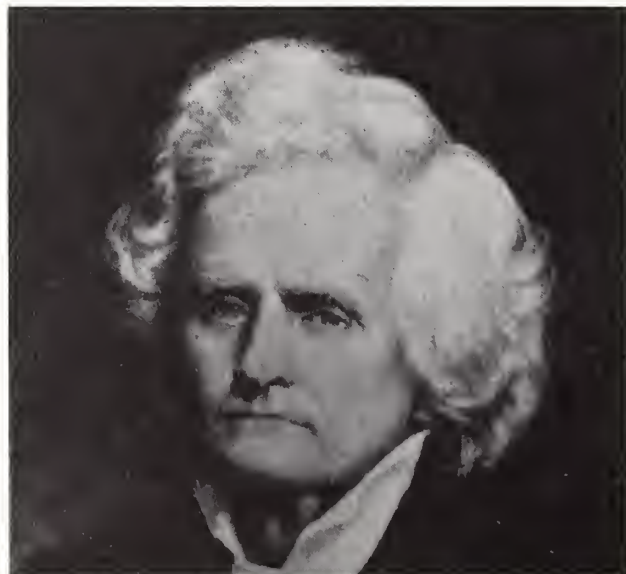
Editor's Note: This article is based on the following letters from Washburne to Lincoln in the Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress: December 19, 1854; December 26, 1854; January 17, 1855; May 2, 1858; May 31, 1858; May 19, 1860; May 20, 1860; May 30, 1860; December 9, 1860; January 6, 1863; and May 1, 1863. Grant's letter to Washburne about Lincoln's use of his letters is also in that collection (September 21, 1864).

LINCOLN AUTOGRAPHED DEBATES: STEPHEN T. LOGAN COPY

Many would say that this, the sixth article in a series on the presentation copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois*, should have been the first. The copy presented to the "Hon. S.T. Logan, From his friend A. Lincoln" is the only known copy signed in ink. Harry Pratt, who published the first survey of these famous books in *Manuscripts* in the summer of 1954, and Charles Hamilton, the famous manuscript dealer, believed that this was very likely the first copy Lincoln gave away. Their theory was that Lincoln discovered when he signed this book that the soft paper caused the ink to smear and thereafter inscribed the copies in pencil.

Stephen Trigg Logan was Lincoln's second law partner and a lifelong friend. Of those who received the known presentation copies, Logan was by far the most closely associated with Lincoln. If he gave copies to David Davis or to John G. Nicolay, for example, they have never come to light.

The Logan copy was in the hands of the Logan family until 1946. Logan's great-granddaughter, Martha Coleman Bray, received the book at the death of her father. He was Christopher Bush Coleman, the son of Lewis Harrison Coleman, who married Stephen T. Logan's daughter Jennie. She sold it to William H. Townsend, a noted Lincoln collector and author from Lexington, Kentucky. Townsend at one time owned two presentation copies of the *Debates*, the Logan copy and the copy given to Job Fletcher. In 1953 he sold the Fletcher copy to the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, which in turn sold it to Lincoln collector Justin G. Turner of Hollywood, California. Sometime later, Turner also acquired Townsend's other copy. In 1968 Victor B. Levit purchased the Logan copy from a sale of Turner's collection at a Charles Hamilton Autographs, Inc., auction. Mr. Levit of the law firm of Long & Levit in San Francisco still owns the Logan copy and very kindly sent me much of the information on which this article is based.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 6. Stephen T. Logan.



Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

June, 1979

Number 1696

LINCOLN AND THE HATEFUL POET

No one hated Abraham Lincoln as thoroughly as Edgar Lee Masters did. He could find little to admire in Lincoln's personal character and less in the Sixteenth President's political legacy. Masters's book, *Lincoln: The Man* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1931), was a publishing sensation which caused tidal waves of indignation across America. Today, the book and the controversy over it are almost completely forgotten. The book is deservedly forgotten, but the controversy over it merits some attention. It marked the end of an era in popular literature in America. It was something of a turning point in the career of Lincoln's image in modern America. And it revealed here and there some of the great intellectual currents of that era of depression.

Masters was an unlikely Lincoln-hater. Had he written a book which praised Lincoln, reviewers and critics would have found it easy to explain. They would have pointed to Masters's roots in Lincoln country. Though born in Garrett, Kansas, in 1869, Masters grew up near the site which has prompted more sentimental reverie about Lincoln than any other, New Salem. That village became a ghost town even in Lincoln's life, but nearby Petersburg, which took its village life from New Salem's death, survived. There, and in Lewistown, Masters spent his youth. The romance of this Sangamon River country captivated even Masters. His *Spoon River Anthology* (1914), which made Masters famous as a poet, included an oft-quoted epitaph for Ann Rutledge:

Out of me unworthy
and unknown
The vibrations of
deathless music;
"With malice toward
none, with charity
for all."

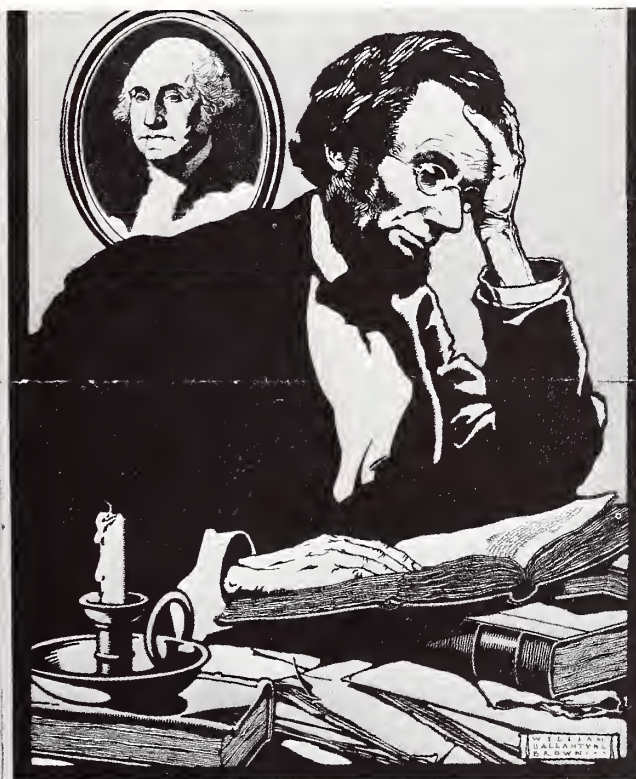
Out of me the
forgiveness of
millions toward
millions,
And the beneficent
face of a nation
Shining with justice
and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge
who sleep beneath
these weeds,

Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic.
From the dust of my bosom!

A closer look at Masters's early years reveals that he was both a part of his environment and a man at odds with it. His grandfather was a Democrat with little sympathy for the North during the Civil War. Edgar Lee Masters's father, Hardin W. Masters, ran away to enlist in the army during the war, but his father brought him back. Hardin Masters became a lawyer and dabbled in Democratic politics. He crossed the prohibition-minded Republicans of Lewistown on more than one occasion.

Edgar Lee Masters continued the family tradition of affiliation with the Democratic party. He too became a lawyer, after graduation from Knox College in Galesburg, and established a practice in Chicago. He continued to practice law somewhat unhappily until his literary career allowed him to give it up in 1920.

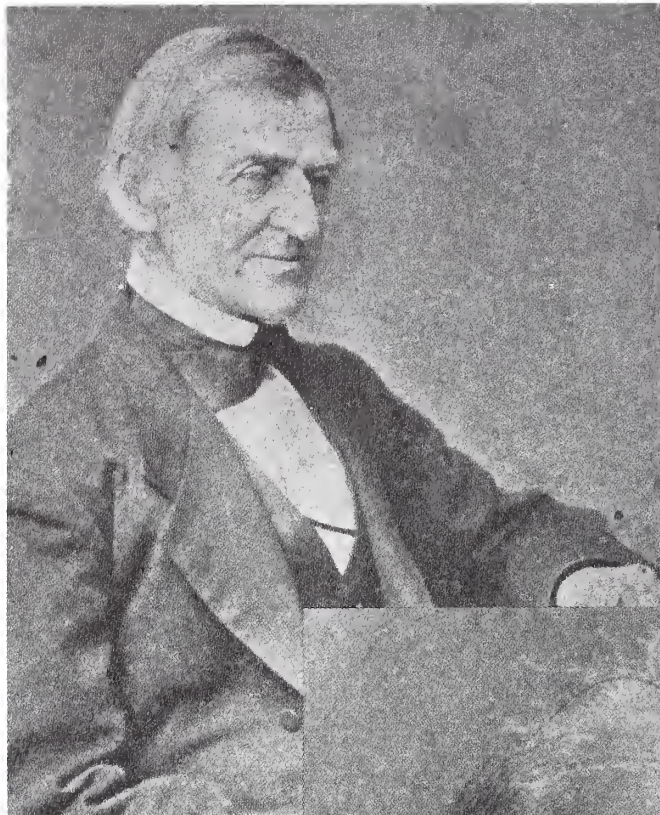
Lincoln: The Man was Edgar Lee Masters's first biography. He had always been interested in politics and in history. Biography was immensely popular in America between the World Wars, in part because a new style of biographical writing titillated the popular imagination. This was the great age of the "debunker," who slayed American heroes in print by the dozens. The prudes and the religiously earnest, like Henry Ward Beecher and William Jennings Bryan, were natural targets for this age of revolt against Victorian morality, but soon the political figures were the objects of attack. George Washington fell to the pen of Rupert Hughes in 1926. *George Washington: The Human Being & The Hero* (New York:



LINCOLN & WASHINGTON
NUMBER ★ 1909

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Before World War I, popular magazines dealt reverentially with Lincoln and Washington. Debunking was not the fashion.



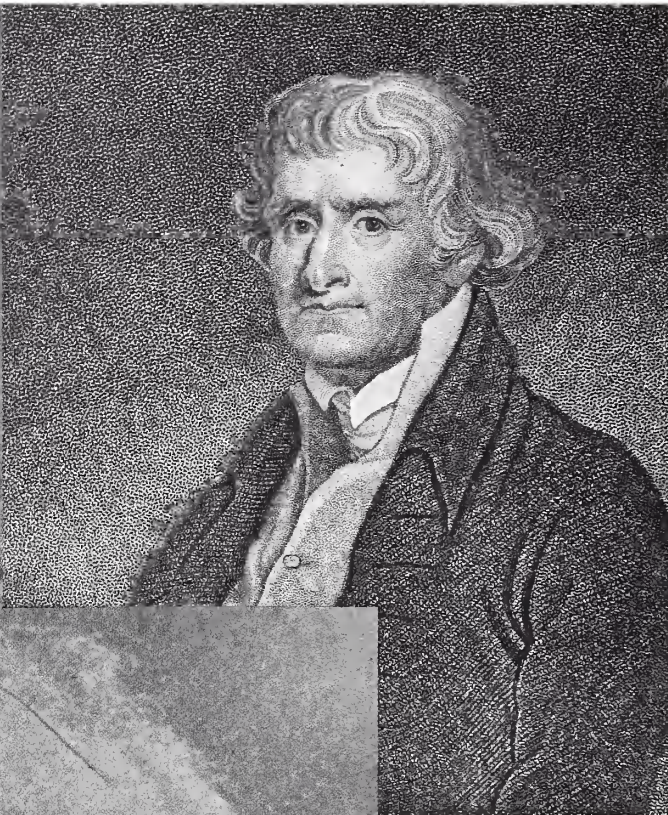
Ralph Waldo Emerson

William Morrow) began by describing George Washington's mother as "a very human, cantankerous old lady" who "smoked a pipe incessantly" and "dragged his pride into the dust by seeking a pension during his lifetime, by wheedlings and borrowings and complaints among the neighbors." Hughes hated Washington's first biographer, "a canting sentimentalist, Parson Weems," and stressed that Washington was not "a man of piety." Chapter XXVIII ended with this characteristic passage:

But George Washington had left old England to her own devices. He was bent upon saving himself first. He was deep in debt. He was betrothed to a woman of great wealth. He was going to marry and settle down to the making of money. Which, after all, is one of the most important duties of any patriot.

Masters wrote in the same debunking spirit.

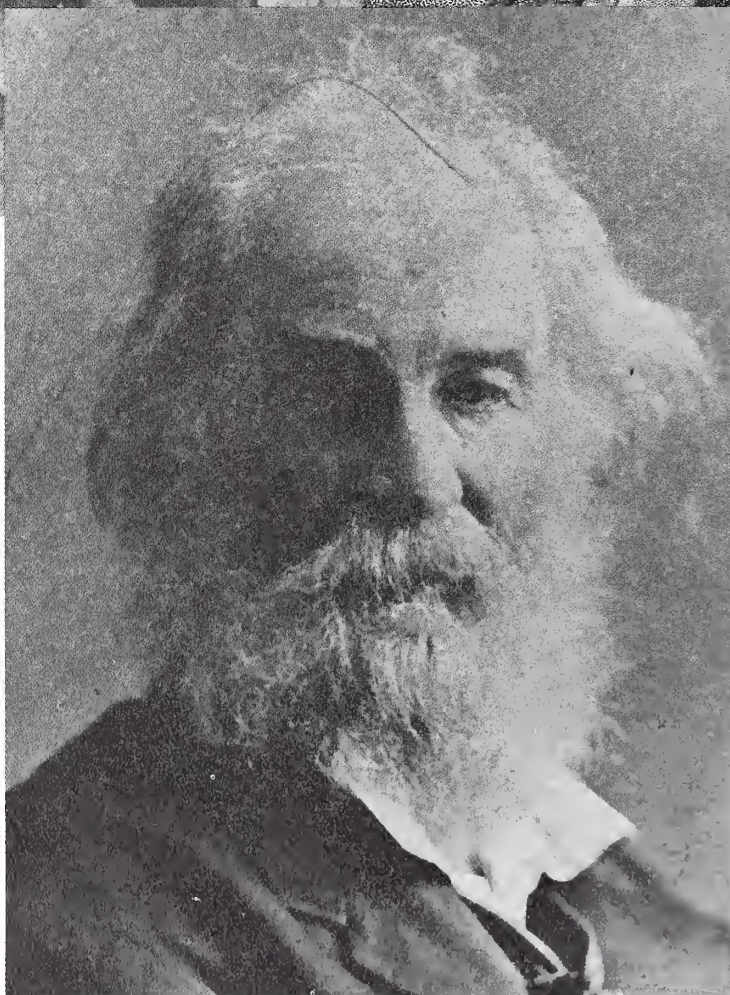
Inspired in part by the success of Albert Beveridge's *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*



Thomas Jefferson

(1928), Masters argued that "As no new fact of moment about Lincoln can now be brought to light, the time has arrived when his apotheosis can be touched with the hand of rational analysis." Masters's debunking spirit was especially informed by the anti-war spirit which pervaded intellectual circles in America after World War I. Heroic reputations and wars went hand in hand. "War," Masters wrote, "makes brutes of those who practice it, and cowards and sycophants of those who have to endure it against their will; and when thinking is cowed and judgment is shackled, great reputations can be built both by stifling criticism and by artifice the facts."

The portrait of Lincoln that Masters drew was savage. The Rail-splitter was "profoundly ashamed of the poverty of his youth" and, therefore, married for money and leagued himself politically with the privileged classes in the Whig party. Though "mannerless" and "unkempt," Lincoln was no back-slapping common man. He was "cold," and



Walt Whitman

*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURES 2, 3, 4. Masters thought that Lincoln's fame unfairly overshadowed the fame of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Jefferson, and Walt Whitman. Lincoln himself thought Jefferson "the most distinguished politician of our history." Emerson thought Lincoln was "the true representative of this continent." Whitman believed that Lincoln was "the grandest figure yet, on all the crowded canvas of the Nineteenth Century." They would not have complained about the distribution of fame as Masters did.

no one called him "Abe." He was also calculating; there simply "was no time when he was not thinking of his career." His mind was "lazy." He never studied and as a result knew little of the history of his country and its institutions. He was a "slick" and "crafty" politician.

Masters relied on Beveridge's recent biography and William H. Herndon's older one for the details to support this hostile portrait of Lincoln's personality. But Herndon and Beveridge wrote little or nothing about Lincoln's Presidency. For his appraisal of that part of Lincoln's life, Masters relied on his own political prejudices. He dedicated the book *"To the Memory of THOMAS JEFFERSON THE PREEMINENT PHILOSOPHER — STATESMAN OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THEIR GREATEST PRESIDENT; WHOSE UNIVERSAL GENIUS THROUGH A LONG LIFE WAS DEVOTED TO THE PEACE, ENLIGHTENMENT AND LIBERTY OF THE UNION CREATED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF 1787."* Lincoln "was a Hamiltonian always, though his awkwardness and poverty, and somewhat gregarious nature and democratic words seemed to mark him as the son of Jefferson." He centralized power.

Lincoln, Masters argued, could and should have avoided the Civil War. Instead, he ordered the invasion of the South. He was a conqueror. He obliterated states' rights and with them the true republic. In this crusade Lincoln wedded religious cant to centralizing politics ("Hebraic Puritanism," Masters called it) and ushered in the forces of industrial plutocracy, prohibition, and political corruption.

Even for an age used to debunking, Masters went too far. Rupert Hughes had been more circumspect. "As a god," he said, "Washington was a woeful failure; as a man he was tremendous." Masters did not give Lincoln any praise except to say that he had a sense of humor. The result was a howl of indignation all across America. School teachers, Boston booksellers, preachers, and Lincoln admirers denounced the book in dozens of letters to the editor, articles, and sermons. Charles E. Tracewell put it very succinctly in the *Washington Star*: "He overdid it."

Reactions to the book ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous. Lewis Gannett in the *New York Herald Tribune* confessed "to a total disbelief in heroes and a profound conviction of the high virtue of debunking. The conventional mythology according to which all great men were born great and never stole cherries or told fibs encourages small boys to feel guilty if they are not prigs. It is a loathsome philosophy." He quarreled with Masters not because he debunked but because he rebunked. It was "sheer poetry" and "heroic moralizing" but all for the other side. "Mr. Masters too has a spotless hero," Gannett said, "Stephen A. Douglas, and his hordes of angels are the soldiers of the Confederacy." The *Oneida* (New York) *Dispatch* said that "Masters' arguments fall of their own weight, inasmuch as his only declaration in Lincoln's favor is that 'he had a sense of humor.'" Yale's William Lyon Phelps was disgusted. "Never in history," he said, "has literature been so consistently filthy and rotten as today . . . it is getting so a good man is afraid to die." Representative Joe Crail of California, who had not read the book, called it "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy and indecent" and introduced a bill in Congress to ban its circulation through the mail. And the custodian of the Lincoln tomb declared: "I have 300 pictures of Lincoln, taken at various ages after he was 5 years of age, showing him in many poses, and not one even hints that he was 'unkempt.' . . . His clothes were neat, his hair well combed and his features pleasant."

Richard F. Fuller, treasurer of the Board of Trade of Boston Book Merchants and a prominent member of the American Booksellers' Association, wrote a letter to the *Boston Herald* stating that he was glad that *Lincoln: The Man* was not selling well. The Boston newspaper speculated that "the craze for biography" was ebbing, but Masters's publisher reported no disappointment with sales in New York. William L. Nevin, president of New York's John Wanamaker department store, refused to place the book on sale. Wanamaker's Philadelphia store did the same.

Masters had a fine reputation as a man of letters, especially as a poet, and Samuel B. Howe of the South Side High School in Newark, New Jersey, found it beyond his "powers of belief that a man like Masters could say the things he is quoted as saying." It was not an angry young man's book. Masters was over sixty when he wrote it, and this fact invited speculation about his motive. Famed Lincoln collector Oliver R. Barrett of Chicago said that Masters "glimpsed over the top of mediocrity" with his *Spoon River Anthology*, "but from the infection of that fatal praise he became too fearless, too painfully

analytical, and too willing to warm over and serve up his earlier successes. His popularity waned, the public turned to newer lights, and now his 'Abraham Lincoln, the Man' appears — a volume of protest." He noted also that Masters called Jefferson, Whitman, and Emerson the greatest Americans from whose fame "the praise that has been bestowed on Lincoln is a robbery." Jefferson was long dead by the time of Lincoln's Presidency, of course, but Emerson and Whitman both praised Lincoln. Officials of the National Lincoln League referred simply to the author's "commercialized base-ness."

Thoughtful reviewers ranged widely in their assessments of the book. A writer for the *Hugo* (Oklahoma) *News* read the *New York Times Magazine* review of *Lincoln: The Man* and complimented it:

It was wisely observed by the . . . reviewer that Masters' work is no Confederate biography — that it is a copperhead biography — that it is such a book as a Knight of the Golden Circle would have written. For it is personal. It is spiteful. It is hateful. It is mean. A Confederate writer probably would criticize the principles and policies of the war president, but he certainly would eulogize the kindly personality and charitable spirit of Lincoln. And it may be observed that in no other section of the country is the Lincoln name attaining such stature right now as it is attaining at the south. The revelatory works of Claude Bowers and Striker and George Fort Milton are teaching southerners how terrible a loss they suffered when Lincoln was killed and his peace-making policies were repudiated by political radicals. Most southerners now believe that if Lincoln had lived, he would have been more successful than Andrew Johnson in his efforts to prevent the onrush of the reconstruction terror.

This astute writer put his finger on a principal reason why Masters found almost no allies at all in his attack on Lincoln. Several editorials from former Confederate states, though they showed no special interest in defending Lincoln, did link him with Andrew Johnson and the (then) new view that Johnson tried to follow Lincoln's mild Reconstruction policies and to fend off a Radical Republican conspiracy to rape the South. The reviewer's assessment of opinion in the South was accurate. Times had changed since 1865.

Few wasted any kind words on Masters's effort. Professional cynic H. L. Mencken, whose review in the *New York Herald Tribune* was widely quoted and attacked, praised the book. Mencken agreed that "Lincoln turned his back on the Jacksonian tradition and allowed himself to be carried out by the tide that was eventually to wash away the old Republic altogether and leave in its place a plutocratic oligarchy hard to distinguish from the Roman." Lincoln's "most memorable feat," Mencken wrote, "was his appointment of the Lord God Jehova to the honorary chairmanship of the Republican National Committee." The Bill of Rights, Mencken added, "has never recovered" from Lincoln's repressive administration.

Claude Bowers, newspaperman-turned-historian and an active Democrat, called the book "intensely interesting" and "challenging." Harry Elmer Barnes thought the book might "compel the devotees of the Lincoln cult to listen to reason, something which they have not done in our generation." Barnes had argued "at the very progressive Twentieth Century Club in Boston" that Lincoln was unpopular in his own day; Barnes only "narrowly escaped physical assault at the hands of an Anglican Bishop who was present." Masters "rendered a genuine constructive service" by establishing "the precedent for fearless investigation of the career of the Great Emancipator." The *Syracuse* (New York) *Standard* interviewed faculty members at the local university, one of whom, history professor Edwin P. Tanner, also thought "Masters . . . rendered us a real service." Historian H. G. Eckenrode praised the book as "an exceedingly powerful and convincing work."

Most thoughtful critics — like Louis A. Warren in *Lincoln Lore*; Paul Angle, then the Secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association; and historian Claude M. Fuess — dismissed the book because it was less a history than an indictment. Masters had been a lawyer as well as a poet, and he argued a case against Lincoln as though he were fighting for a client's life. Fuess noted the excesses of Masters's language. The principles of the Whig party "were plunder and nothing else." The Republican party was "conceived in hatred and mothered in hatred, and went forth from a diseased womb without a name." Lincoln's record in Congress was "a tracing of his wavering mind, his incoherent thinking." He was "an undersexed man." His nomination at Chicago was the result of

"brutality and cunning." His attitude toward the South was one "of hidden and deep malignancy." Warren noted that the author was consumed by three passions. He hated the Christian religion; he hated "modern Americanism, and especially the political party now in power [Republicans]"; and he hated most American heroes. Angle noted the paradoxes of Masters's hatreds:

An advocate of slavery as a social system, he criticizes Lincoln for not opposing its existence in the South. An opponent of capitalism, he lauds Douglas as a statesman of the industrial era. A scathing critic of those who would pass moral judgments, there is hardly a page in his book on which he has failed to condemn or justify.

Lincoln: The Man, then, was a personal book, more interesting for what it revealed about Masters than for what it said about Lincoln. Reporters in New York City were able to interview the author, and the newspaper reports of these interviews were revealing. Earl Sparling of the New York *Telegram* described Masters as sitting in the office of his publisher, "his mouth a grim, austere slit, only his battered hat to show him a poet." The poet said that "we have a Christian republic; no slavery, no polygamy, no saloons; only monopolists, bureaucrats, corrupt courts, imbecile Senators obeying Wall Street, fanatics, clergymen." The Emancipation Proclamation, calculated to make Lincoln famous, was "in the direction of inspiring Negroes to rise and kill the white people." To a New York *Times* reporter, Masters protested that he was "not an iconoclast." A reporter for the *Herald Tribune* visited Masters in his home on West Twenty-Third Street. If Lincoln had let the states go in peace, Masters told the reporter, "They would have come back into the Union in less than five years. Economic necessity would have forced them back."

Nearly fifty years later, what can be said about Edgar Lee Masters and the controversy over *Lincoln: The Man*? First, though he railed against Wall Street, monopoly, and war, Masters's radicalism was largely cultural rather than political. Masters said that he hated prohibition "worse than anything since abolition." He was still fighting the small-town Republican prohibitionists his father fought back in Lewistown. His political and social criticism was neither profound nor well thought out. It had a veneer of sophistication because of his penchant for constitutional debate, a heritage of his legal background. Though critics dwelled on his Democratic affiliation, his denunciation of Lincoln's centralizing power would not endear him to the Democratic party of the 1930s.

Second, Masters's values boiled down to a peculiar nostalgia for the small-town America against which he first rebelled in the *Spoon River Anthology*. He believed in a "storybook democracy," to borrow a phrase from another contemporary novelist and social critic, John Dos Passos. Much of the content of this nostalgia was essentially racist. One suspects that the Civil War seemed hardly worth fighting to him because he could not see any wisdom in shedding white men's blood for the sake of slaves. He wrote a poem entitled "The Great Race Passes," which borrowed its key phrase from Madison Grant's famous racist book, *The Passing of the Great Race*. He loathed immigrants, felt that Civil War casualties had depleted the racial stock of America's "better days," and was antisemitic. Masters hated "Hebraic Puritanism" in part because he saw Christianity as perpetuating some of the religious ideas of Judaism. He once blamed the Civil War on a Jewish lust for money. He thought that Jews had spoiled the poetic talent of Vachel Lindsay; Jewish critics in New York shaped American opinion of poetry written in Chicago.

Third, Masters altogether misjudged the spirit of his age. When *Lincoln: The Man* appeared, critic after critic immediately labeled it as just another debunking book in the Rupert Hughes tradition. Instead of riding the crest of a wave, Masters in fact sank in a sea of predictable cynicism. The Philadelphia *Inquirer* placed the book in the "new school of biography in this country" and attacked the evolution of this school:

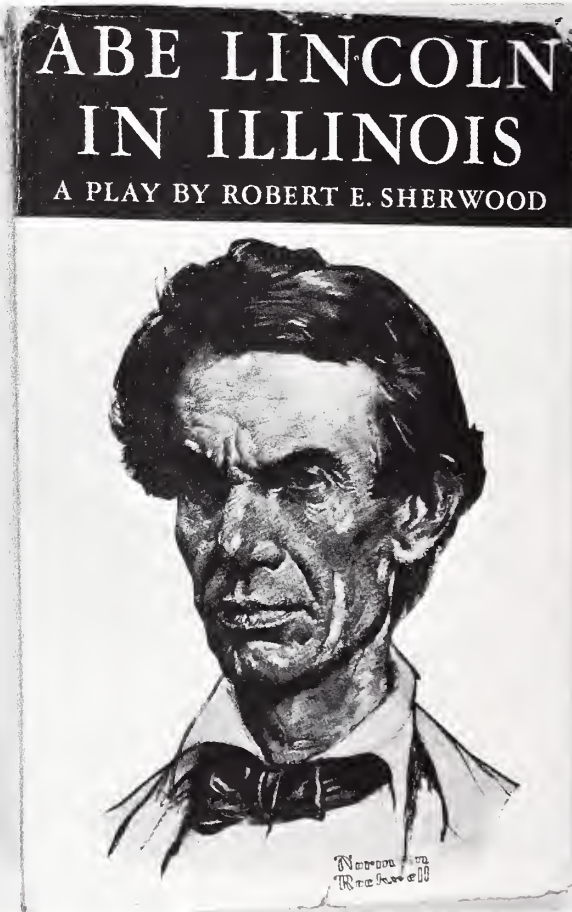
The original series of "real" biographies which were given to the public many years ago were entertaining and valuable because they made an honest attempt to depict notable men and women as they actually existed. But in these jazz days biographers are not content with giving distorted pictures of their subjects; they also take joy in attacking their motives.

More than one reviewer had ready at hand this anecdote to scotch the debunking spirit:

Two or three years ago another American writer made a speech about George Washington in which he said things resented by the people, who revered the memory of the Father of His Country. The day after the speech was made the Washington correspondents asked President Coolidge what he thought about the things that had been said.

Coolidge turned, looked out of the window toward the towering Washington monument, and said: "I notice it is still up there."

Masters's book was the last gasp of the debunking spirit in America between the wars. The popular Lincoln books and plays of the Depression era praised Lincoln. Robert Sherwood's play, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, and Carl Sandburg's mammoth biography are the obvious examples. Predictions that Masters's "Copperhead" biography would not put a dent in Lincoln's reputation proved true. The book is largely forgotten. Stephen Oates, whose recent biography (*With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*) stresses that no one called Lincoln "Abe," does not mention Masters's book. Even Masters himself by 1944 could write an article on "Abe Lincoln's New Salem" which called "Lincoln's career . . . more magical, more dramatic, than Washington's or Jackson's." He wrote the article for a magazine he would surely have shunned in 1931, *The Rotarian*!



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. Robert E. Sherwood's play, published as a book in 1939, won a Pulitzer Prize and launched Raymond Massey's career as a portrayer of Lincoln on stage and screen. The illustration on the dust jacket resembles Massey more than Lincoln and shows how much the success of the play depended on the actor in Lincoln's role. The legalistic and pro-Southern Masters surely disliked Lincoln's speech in the play in which he denounced the Supreme Court as an institution "composed of mortal men, most of whom . . . come from the privileged class in the South."



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Thurlow Weed's behavior during the Civil War seemed thoroughly out of character. In the past he had been largely indifferent to policy, but he became so upset at Lincoln's policies that he nearly broke with the administration.

gracious note in lieu of attending. He wrote the note, ironically, on election day:

Allow me to wish you a great success. With the old fame of the Navy, made brighter in the present war, you can not fail. I name none, lest I wrong others by omission. To all, from Rear Admiral, to honest Jack I tender the Nation's admiration and gratitude [...]

Lincoln was sincerely grateful for the sailors' services in the war, but politically he could have done without them. Jack Tar was a Democrat.

LINCOLN AUTOGRAPHED DEBATES: THE ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS COPY

This is the seventh article in a series on the signed presentation copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois*. The copy bearing the inscription, "To Hon: Archibald Williams, with respects of A. Lincoln," was the property of Kenneth K. Bechtel of San Francisco when Harry E. Pratt wrote "Lincoln Autographed Debates" for *Manuscripts* in 1954. It is now the property of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. The library was unable to describe the book's history since Mr. Bechtel's ownership.

Archibald Williams was born in Kentucky in 1801. He came to Quincy, Illinois, in 1829. There he established a successful law practice. Quincy lay in what was called the Military Tract, the land between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers most of which had been granted as bounties to soldiers in the War of 1812. Most of the veterans were forced to sell their claims to Eastern land speculators. Some lost them in tax sales, not realizing their liability to pay taxes on the claims. Questions of priority of ownership and clarity of title racked the Military Tract, and it became a paradise for lawyers (who could get good fees from the well-heeled speculators and their agents). Williams was soon noted for his abilities as a lawyer in land disputes.

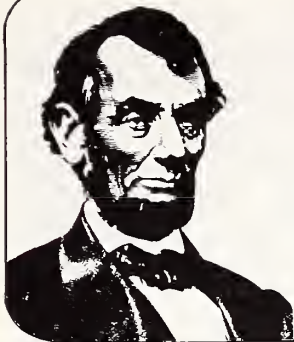
Williams became acquainted with Lincoln when both men served in the Illinois Legislature at Vandalia in the 1830s. The Quincy Whig served in the Illinois Senate from 1832-1836 and in the Illinois House from 1836-1840. Usher F. Linder remembered Lincoln and Williams sitting near each other in the southeast corner of the old State House in Vandalia; they were "great friends," he said. Legal work also brought the two men together. Lincoln was associated with Williams in several cases and apparently took some of the Quincy lawyer's cases on appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court in Springfield.

Both former Kentuckians were Henry Clay Whigs. In 1848, when Lincoln dropped Clay for Zachary Taylor and some hope of winning, Williams was apparently slow to switch his loyalties. Lincoln told him flatly, "Mr. Clay's chance for an election, is just no chance at all." Both Williams and Lincoln were friends of Orville Hickman Browning, another Quincy lawyer and active Whig politician. "I know our good friend Browning," Lincoln told Williams, "is a great admirer of Mr. Clay, and I therefore fear, he is favoring his nomination." Lincoln instructed Williams to ask Browning "to discard feeling, and try if he can possibly, as a matter of judgment, count the votes necessary to elect him." Williams evidently jumped on the Taylor bandwagon, for, after the election, Lincoln wrote a letter recommending his appointment as U.S. District Attorney (Lincoln did not like the idea of rewarding holdouts for Clay's nomination with appointive offices). Williams gained the appointment and held office until the Democrats took over the Presidency in 1853. In 1852 he joined with Lincoln in organizing a meeting to express sympathy for Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth.

In 1854 Williams joined the many Illinois Whigs who denounced the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He ran for Congress, but, even with Lincoln's help (he came to Quincy to make a speech in Williams's behalf), he lost. Williams evidently had designs on the United States Senate seat to be filled by the state legislature in 1855. Lincoln wanted the seat too, but he explained to a legislator apparently pledged to Williams: "Of course I prefer myself to all others; yet it is neither in my heart nor my conscience to say I am any better man than Mr. Williams." Despite their competing ambitions, Lincoln and Williams were evidently in substantial agreement on political principles in this tumultuous period of confusing politics. Lincoln told one supporter in 1855 that a set of resolutions Williams had drawn up fairly accurately described the ground on which he would be willing to "fuse" with other anti-Nebraska groups. Three years later Williams was once again mentioned as a competitor for the Senate seat Lincoln sought in his historic campaign against Stephen A. Douglas.

Ambition for office did not drive the two men apart. The copy of the *Debates* which Lincoln gave Williams is some evidence of this (Lincoln also gave Williams's law partner Jackson Grimshaw a signed copy). Even more important was President Lincoln's appointment of Williams as U.S. District Judge in Kansas.

Usher Linder remembered Williams as a man "over six feet high, and as angular and ungainly in his form as Mr. Lincoln himself; and for homeliness of face and feature, surpassed Mr. Lincoln." Linder also recalled that Lincoln thought highly of Williams as "the strongest-minded and clearest headed man he ever saw." Linder, who knew both men in the legislature, was a Universalist in religion and thought everyone would go to heaven. If he was correct in his "views of the mercies of God," Linder said long after his old friend Archie Williams was dead, "he is now walking the golden streets with Douglas and Lincoln."



Lincoln Lore

September, 1979

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1699

LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD FRIENDS: FRIENDS OF THE NEGRO

On June 24, 1847, Benjamin Bond offered a resolution to the Illinois Constitutional Convention "to report a provision prohibiting free negroes from emigrating into this State, and that no person shall bring slaves into this State from other States and set them free." Bond's motion eventually became Article 14 of the Illinois Constitution. Abraham Lincoln was not a member of the constitutional convention, and, since he assumed his seat in the United States House of Representatives in December, he was not in Springfield on March 6, 1848, to vote on the article. There is nothing on the subject in his surviving correspondence. Some of Lincoln's friends and political associates, however, were members of the convention, and many of his Springfield neighbors did vote on the constitution — and on Article 14, which was submitted separately for a vote — in the spring of 1848. The record of the convention and of the votes of his Springfield friends goes a long way towards dashing any argument that Abraham Lincoln's racial views were deeply rooted in Western negrophobia.

Benjamin Bond was a Whig, but his resolution stirred plenty of opposition among fellow Whig delegates to the constitutional convention. Stephen Trigg Logan, who had been Lincoln's law partner three years before, was one of the Whig delegates who had doubts about the resolution. "It was a subject of a good deal of delicacy," he suggested, "and one upon which it was difficult at all times clearly to distinguish between judgement and prejudice." John M. Palmer, a Democrat, detested "one idea" reformers, but "Every impulse of his heart and every feeling of his, was in opposition to slavery." Agitation of the subject blocked quiet movements to ameliorate the slaves' condition and "remove the great stain of moral guilt now upon this great republic." The proposition, therefore, should not be in the constitution. Logan, too,

wanted to leave the proposition out, in part because he "respected the abolitionists and believed them to be honest and sincere." Stephen A. Hurlbut, a Whig like Logan, "never would consent to" the proposition.

Lincoln's brother-in-law Ninian Wirt Edwards was also a member of the convention. A month after Bond offered his resolution, Edwards suggested a cleverly thought out amendment to the proposed bill of rights:

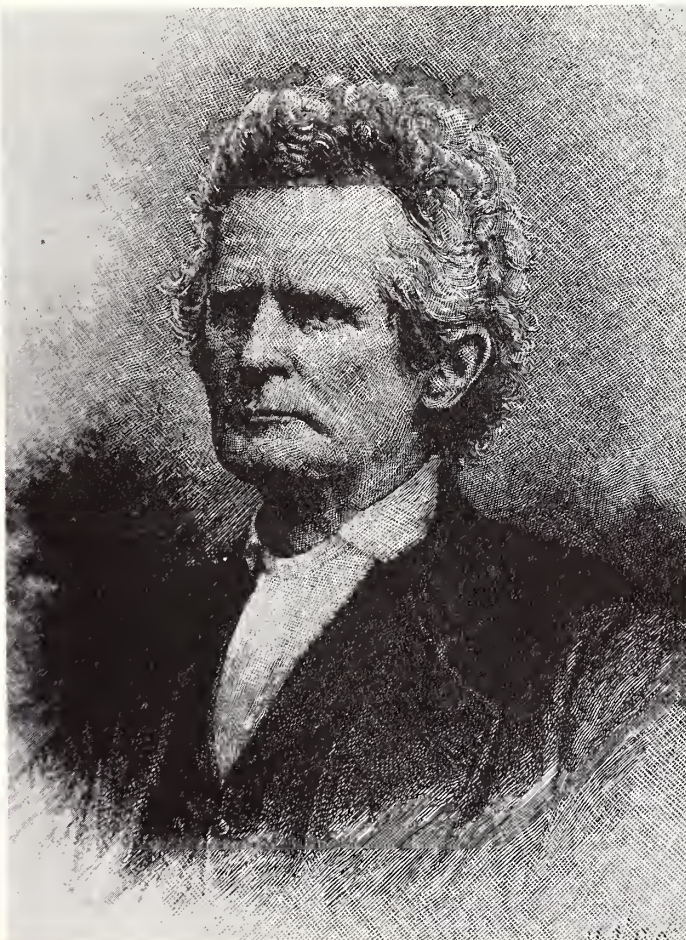
Whereas, so much of section nineteen of the bill of rights as provides for the restriction upon blacks, in connection with certain civil rights, privileges and immunities, is an implied admission of their possession of such rights, as citizens of this state and the United States, in the absence

of such constitutional restrictions; and, *whereas*, the directions therein given to the Legislature presupposes that any portion of the people of this state would be in favor of conferring such rights and privileges (as is therein denied) to colored people; and *whereas*, the Legislature would have no power to allow to persons of color to hold office and without any constitutional prohibition have already passed laws with severe penalties, not only making intermarriage and marriage contracts between them and the whites a criminal offence, but null and void, therefore,

Resolved, That said article be committed to the committee on Revision with instructions to omit so much of said section as refers to persons of color.

Springfield voted overwhelmingly to bar entry of Negroes into Illinois, 774-148. The minuscule 16% minority which defied prejudice, however, contained a number of people whose names are quite familiar to Lincoln students.

STEPHEN TRIGG LOGAN was true to his stand at the convention. On voting day he voted against the exclusion clause. A Kentuckian, like Lincoln, Logan had been Lincoln's law partner from 1841 to 1844, when the partnership was amicably dissolved so that Logan could bring his son David



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Stephen Trigg Logan grew timid in old age, but in 1848 he said "no."

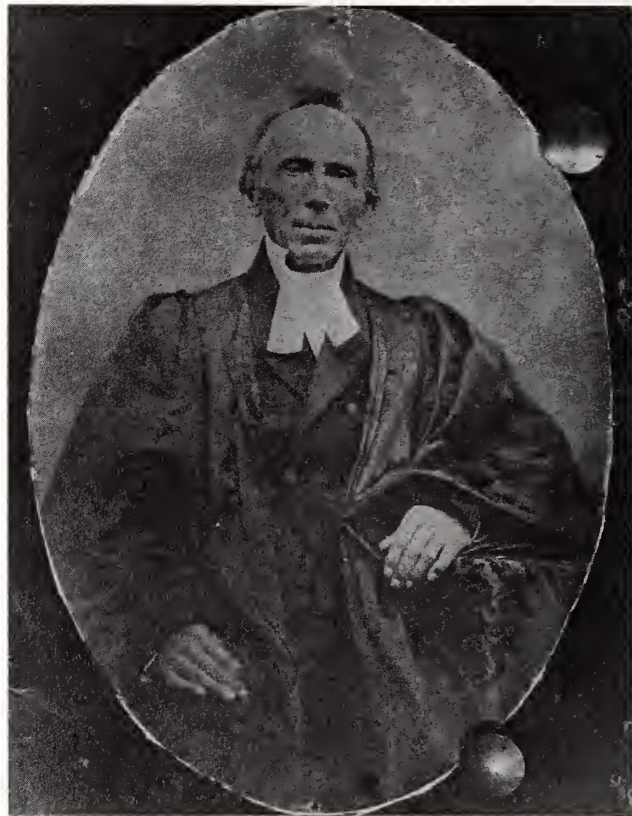
into his firm. Lincoln and Logan were close associates in the Whig party in the 1840s, and Logan would be the Whig candidate for Lincoln's Congressional seat the next August.

NINIAN WIRT EDWARDS was also true to his position at the convention and voted against the exclusion clause. Edwards, also a Kentuckian by birth, had married Mary Todd Lincoln's sister Elizabeth in 1832. Edwards was also a Whig, though his political views differed considerably in tone from Lincoln's. Usher F. Linder recalled that the socially prominent Edwards hated "democracy . . . as the devil is said to hate holy water." In August he would run for the Illinois House of Representatives.

ANSON G. HENRY, who was one of Lincoln's closest political associates in the 1840s as well as his doctor, voted against the clause barring Negroes from Illinois. Lincoln and Henry were perhaps the most organization-minded Whigs in the state, and the doctor was a tireless letter-writer and political worker. Henry had been born in Richfield, New York, but had lived in Illinois since the early 1830s. Later in 1848, he and Lincoln would stump the district for Zachary Taylor.

SIMEON FRANCIS, who also voted against the exclusion clause, was the editor of Springfield's Whig newspaper, the *Illinois State Journal*. After what Lincoln referred to as the fatal first of January, 1841, Mrs. Francis had been instrumental in getting Lincoln and Mary Todd back together again. Simeon Francis frequently opened the *Journal's* pages to Lincoln. He had been born in Connecticut, but he moved to Springfield in 1831. By 1848 he was thinking of moving to Oregon, and a year later Lincoln would seek his appointment as Secretary of Oregon Territory from the Taylor administration.

JAMES COOK CONKLING, another opponent of the exclusion clause, was a Princeton graduate, born in New York City. When he moved to Springfield in 1838, he very quickly moved into genteel society. He married Mercy Ann Levering, one of Mary Todd Lincoln's best friends. A Whig in politics, Conkling had been elected mayor of Springfield in 1844.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. The Reverend Charles Dresser abstained.

JAMES HARVEY MATHENY was also a Whig associate of Lincoln's. He was probably the best man at Lincoln's wedding in 1842. In 1858 Stephen A. Douglas would call Matheny, Lincoln's "especial confidential friend for the last twenty years." He was an Illinois native.

ALBERT TAYLOR BLEDSOE was the chief editorial writer for the *Illinois State Journal* while Lincoln was in Congress. Born in Kentucky, he was a West Point graduate, an Episcopal minister at one time, and, for a time, the law partner of Lincoln's friend Edward D. Baker. A Whig in politics, Bledsoe would move from Springfield later in 1848 to take up residence in Mississippi, where his racial views would change a great deal.

BENJAMIN S. EDWARDS voted, as his brother Ninian Wirt did, against the exclusion article. A Yale graduate, his legal career had brought him many of the same acquaintances Lincoln had. After studying law in New Haven, he read law in Stephen T. Logan's office, was briefly associated with Edward D. Baker, and in 1843 became John Todd Stuart's partner. Stuart had been Lincoln's first law partner. Edwards was a Whig.

Some people who voted for the constitution did not vote on the Negro exclusion clause. The meaning of an abstention on this issue is not altogether clear, but it shows at least a lack of aggressive prejudice, a willingness not to bait the race issue, and a contentment with leaving the free Negro alone.

JOHN TODD STUART abstained on the exclusion article. A Kentuckian who became Lincoln's political mentor in the Illinois Legislature, Stuart was also the man who encouraged Lincoln to study law. Thereafter, he showed his faith in the New Salem railsplitter by taking him as his partner.

CHARLES DRESSER also abstained from voting on the exclusion article. Born in Connecticut, he became Springfield's Episcopal Rector in 1838. On November 4, 1842, he solemnized the marriage vows of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. John Todd Stuart abstained.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. John M. Palmer.

Not all of the voters against the Negro exclusion clause were Whigs or friends of Abraham Lincoln, of course. Peter Cartwright, an ardent Democrat whom Lincoln had defeated in his race for Congress in 1846, voted against the article. And John Calhoun, another Democrat who had appointed the penniless Lincoln as his deputy surveyor in New Salem, abstained from voting on the article.

Nor were Lincoln's personal and political friends unanimous in their opposition to the exclusion of free Negroes from Illinois.

WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON voted for the exclusion article. At the time of the vote, he was Lincoln's law partner and enthusiastic Whig ally. They were having a dispute, however, over Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War. Herndon could not understand Lincoln's stand in a constitutional, moral, or political sense, though Lincoln sent him letter after letter explaining his position.

DAVID LOGAN did not vote the way his father Stephen Trigg Logan voted. He supported the exclusion of Negroes from the state.

WILLIAM BUTLER, famed for his ability to predict the outcome of elections, was born in Kentucky. A friend of Stephen T. Logan's, he was an active Whig and a political associate of Lincoln's. He supported the exclusion article.

The preponderance in number as well as in importance in Lincoln's life lay with those who opposed the exclusion article. Lincoln's friends opposed it, though there were significant exceptions — most notably, William Herndon.

The vote on this constitutional article is not a reliable predictor of later political behavior. Hurlbut became a Republican and was entrusted by Lincoln in 1861 with a delicate information-gathering mission to South Carolina. Palmer also became a Republican and a sturdy supporter of Lincoln's political career. Lincoln in turn made him a brigadier general. Other members of the constitutional convention who protested anti-black legislation had very different political careers. Edwards became a Democrat — a move that shocked Lincoln — and he opposed Lincoln's

election in 1860. Logan's politics during the Lincoln administration were murky. Herndon said that he was like other "monied men": "old & timid — disturbed and terrified." During Reconstruction he became a Democrat, though he later returned to the Republican fold.

Simeon Francis, Anson Henry, and James Cook Conkling became Republicans. Conkling was staunchly antislavery and told President Lincoln of his hope that Union military victories would leave "no question as to the condition and rights of 'American citizens of African descent.'"

Matheny, on the other hand, dragged his feet in becoming a Republican, entering the party much later than Lincoln. Edwards became a Republican in 1856, but he switched to the Democratic party a year later. Albert Taylor Bledsoe, far from becoming a Republican, grew gradually to advocate slavery as biblically justified. He was the Assistant Secretary of War of the Confederate States of America!

The complexities of American politics in the middle of the nineteenth century prevent attaching any clear racial views to those of Lincoln's friends who opposed the exclusion article. Their later political views were not necessarily consistent with a friendly stance towards the Negro. Moreover, the extremism of the article probably caused some to doubt its constitutionality, no matter what their sentiments on racial questions. Still, the mass of voters certainly did not think it extreme, and over 80% of Springfield's citizens supported it. To be a part of so small a minority in opposition was a significant, even heroic, act.

Editor's Note: Archivist Dean DeBolt of the Sangamon State University Library generously sent microfilmed copies of the poll books on which this article is based.

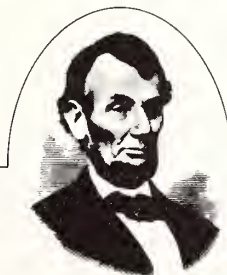
R. GERALD McMURTRY LECTURES PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Printed copies of the 1979 R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture, Don E. Fehrenbacher's *The Minor Affair: An Adventure in Forgery and Detection*, are available on request. A few copies of the 1978 lecture, Richard N. Current's *Unity, Ethnicity, & Abraham Lincoln*, are still available as well. Requests will be filled as long as supplies last.

THE MINOR AFFAIR An Adventure in Forgery and Detection

DON E.
FEHRENBACHER

THE SECOND ANNUAL
R. GERALD McMURTRY LECTURE
DELIVERED AT
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA
1979





Lincoln Lore

November, 1979

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1701

LINCOLN, THE MEXICAN WAR, AND SPRINGFIELD'S VETERANS

Congressman Abraham Lincoln had a theory to explain the loss of his district to the Democrats following his single term in the United States House of Representatives. It was a ticklish situation because Lincoln's old law partner, Stephen Trigg Logan, was the unsuccessful Whig candidate for Lincoln's seat. Thomas L. Harris, who had served in the Mexican War as a captain of the Fourth Illinois Regiment, was the successful Democratic candidate. When asked to explain Logan's defeat, Lincoln said:

I would rather not be put upon explaining how Logan was defeated in my district. In the first place I have no particulars from there, my friends, supposing I am on the road home, not having written me. Whether there was a full turn out of the voters I have as yet not learned. The most I can now say is that a good many Whigs, without good cause, as I think, were unwilling to go for Logan, and some of them so wrote me before the election. On the other hand Harris was a Major of the war, and fought at Cerro Gordo, where several Whigs of the district fought with him. These two facts and their effects, I presume tell the whole story. That there is any political change against us in the district I cannot believe; because I wrote some time ago to every county of the district for an account of changes; and, in answer I got the names of four against us, eighty-three for us. I dislike to predict, but it seems to me the district must and will be found right side up again in November.

Unfortunately for history, Logan's close association with Lincoln prevented the Congressman from explaining precisely why a number of Whigs were discontented with Logan's candidacy. Lincoln's gentlemanly reticence caused the loss to history forever of his explanation of Logan's failings. It also helped give rise to the story that the weight of Lincoln's record of opposition to the Mexican War caused Logan's defeat.

Even without Lincoln's explanation of Logan's lack of popularity among some Whigs, the historian has at least a partial theory of the district's surprising Democratic vote. Since the voters turned out in very large

numbers, the important part of Lincoln's theory is its stress on the Mexican War veterans' vote.

Figures for the whole district are not available, but Sangamon County's poll books for the 1848 election show how Springfield's veterans voted. Most of Springfield's veterans had served in Company A of the Fourth Illinois Regiment. Not all of the soldiers in the company were from Springfield, and not all of the Springfield men voted in the 1848 election. Nevertheless, the votes of a number of the Springfield veterans are recorded:

Captain Horatio E. Roberts (Democrat)
Second Lieutenant John S. Bradford (Democrat)
Sergeant Walter Davis (Whig)
Sergeant David Logan (Whig)
Sergeant Dudley Wickersham (Democrat)
Private Grandison Addison (Democrat)
Private John J. Balantine (Democrat)
Private William W. Brown (Democrat)
Private Zebulon P. Cabaniss (Whig)
Private John Chapman (Democrat)
Private Harvey Darnell (Whig)
Private John E. Foster (Whig)
Private George W. Funk (Whig)
Private Mathew Murray (Democrat)
Private James B. Ransdall (Whig)
Private Charles F. Watson (Whig)

Private Levi P. Watts (Democrat)
Private Thomas Whitehurst (Democrat)
Private Joseph Yeackle (Whig)

Surprisingly, nine of the soldiers voted Whig (for Logan), and nine voted for Democrat Thomas L. Harris.

A number of the 1848 voters had been discharged for various disabilities and were not veterans in the same sense most of those listed above were. Still, they had enlisted to fight and deserve to be considered as men willing to serve their country in the Mexican War. In addition to John S. Bradford, who resigned on September 16, 1846, they were:

Sergeant William W. Pease (Whig)



FIGURE 1. Mexican War recruits.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

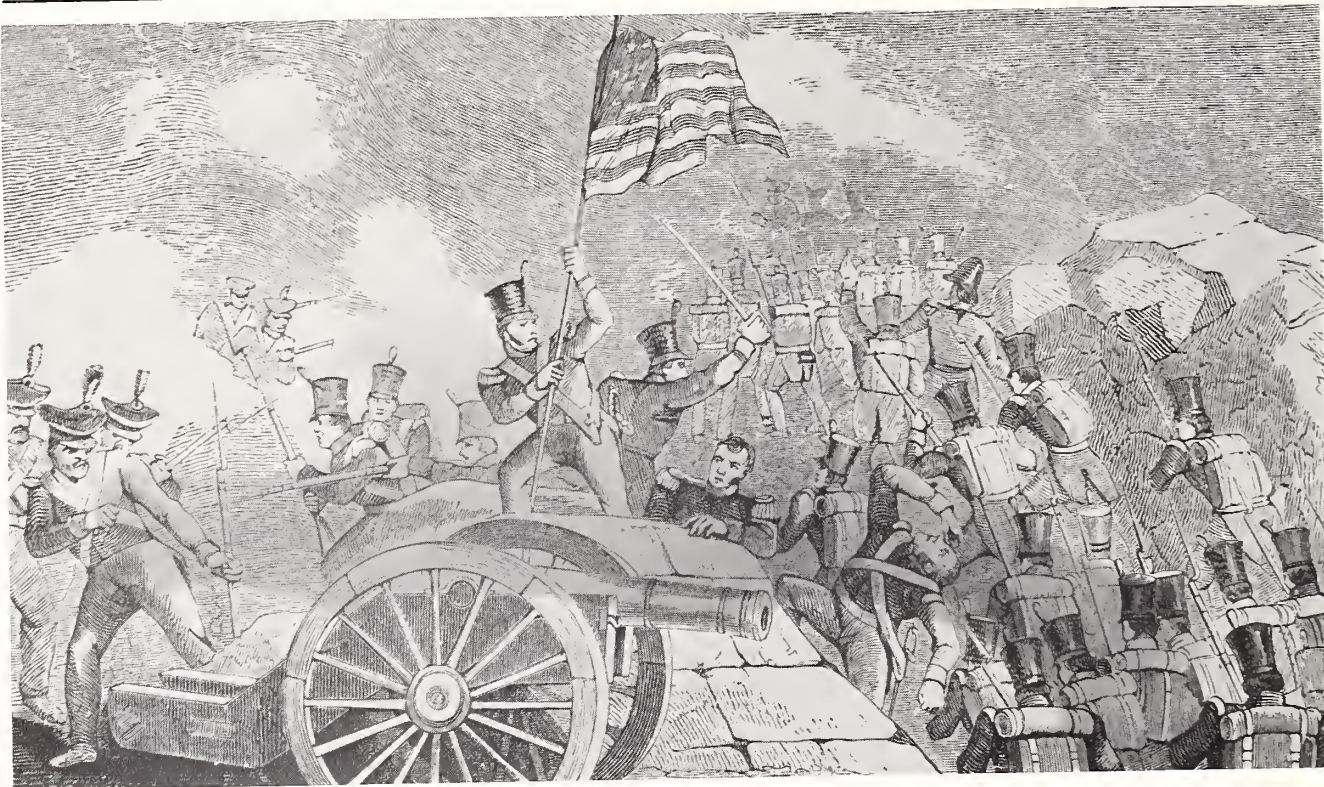


FIGURE 2. The Battle of Cerro Gordo, where Illinois's soldiers fought.

*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

Private Samuel Cole (Whig)
Private Marion F. Mathews (Whig)
Private George C. Whitlock (Democrat)
Private James A. Waugh (Whig)

If these are added to the other veterans' votes, the Whigs captured the veteran vote in Springfield, 13 to 10.

A number of qualifications should be noted. Springfield was overwhelmingly Whig in politics in this period. Therefore, if Whigs and Democrats enlisted in numbers proportionate to their strength in the population at large, a Whig preponderance is to be expected. Problems in interpreting the handwriting in the poll books make the use of some of the names listed above questionable. Mathews, Foster, and Wickersham are questionable interpretations of the names listed in the poll books. Eliminate these three (two Whigs and a Democrat), and the vote stands at 11 to 9.

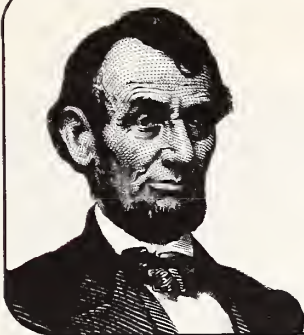
Even making these qualifications, one can see that Lincoln's theory—at least insofar as Springfield was concerned—was probably not correct. Whig soldiers fought in the war while Whig politicians opposed the war at home, but Whig veterans continued to sustain the Whig cause when the war was over. Could it be that some of the nine or ten Democratic votes came from men who previously voted Whig? Probably not. In the first place, companies elected their officers, and Company A had a Democrat as a captain. Probably a majority of the soldiers were Democrats. In the second place, soldiers were young men. Since the Fourth Illinois Regiment left for duty before election day in 1846, these men could have shown their political preference most recently only in 1844. A check of the 1850 census returns reveals that three of the ten soldiers listed in that census were too young to vote in 1844. They, and probably several of the others, were showing their political preference for the first time in 1848.

The most important qualification to bear in mind is that Lincoln was discussing the whole district. The impact of service in the Mexican War may have been much different among rural veterans. Nevertheless, the vote of Springfield's Mexican War veterans is interesting. These men did not turn against the Whig party because Lincoln had opposed the Mexican War, and a majority of them would happily have seen their old captain, Thomas L. Harris, go down to political defeat.



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 3. Edward D. Baker was a close friend and political ally of Abraham Lincoln's. He and John J. Hardin, the other strong Whig leader in Lincoln's congressional district, chose to serve in the Mexican War. Lincoln always had complete confidence that such Whig veterans shared his view that the war was unconstitutional and unnecessary.



Lincoln Lore

January, 1980

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1703

LINCOLN AND SLAVERY: AN OVERVIEW

Abraham Lincoln was a native of a slave state, Kentucky. In 1811 Hardin County, where Lincoln was born two years before, contained 1,007 slaves and 1,627 white males above the age of sixteen. His father's brother Mordecai owned a slave. His father's Uncle Isaac may have owned over forty slaves. The Richard Berry family, with whom Lincoln's mother Nancy Hanks lived before her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, owned slaves. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, however, were members of a Baptist congregation which had separated from another church because of opposition to slavery. This helps explain Lincoln's statement in 1864 that he was "naturally anti-slavery" and could "not remember when I did not so think, and feel." In 1860 he claimed that his father left Kentucky for Indiana's free soil "partly on account of slavery."

Nothing in Lincoln's political career is inconsistent with his claim to have been "naturally anti-slavery." In 1836, when resolutions came before the Illinois House condemning abolitionism, declaring that the Constitution sanctified the right of property in slaves, and denying the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, Lincoln was one of six to vote against them (seventy-seven voted in favor). Near the end of the term, March 3, 1837, Lincoln and fellow Whig Dan Stone wrote a protest against the resolutions which stated that "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy." It too denounced abolitionism as more likely to exacerbate than abate the evils of slavery and asserted the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia (though the right should not be exercised without the consent of the District's citizens). Congress, of course, had no right to interfere with slavery in the states. In 1860 Lincoln could honestly point to the consistency of his antislavery convictions over the last twenty-three years. That early protest "briefly defined his position on the slavery question; and so far as it goes, it was then the same that it is now."

In his early political career in the 1830s and 1840s, Lincoln had faith in the benign operation of American political institutions. Though "opposed to slavery" throughout the period,

he "rested in the hope and belief that it was in course of ultimate extinction." For that reason, it was only "a minor question" to him. For the sake of keeping the nation together, Lincoln thought it "a paramount duty" to leave slavery in the states alone. He never spelled out the basis of his faith entirely, but he had confidence that the country was ever seeking to approximate the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. All men would be free when slavery, restricted to the areas where it already existed, exhausted the soil, became unprofitable, and was abolished by the slave-holding states themselves or perhaps by numerous individual emancipations. Reaching this goal, perhaps by the end of the century, required of dutiful politicians only "that we should never knowingly lend ourselves directly or indirectly, to prevent . . . slavery from dying a natural death — to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old." This statement, made in 1845, expressed Lincoln's lack of

concern over the annexation of Texas, where slavery already existed. As a Congressman during the Mexican War, Lincoln supported the Wilmot Proviso because it would prevent the growth of slavery in parts of the Mexican cession where the institution did not already exist. He still considered slavery a "distracting" question, one that might destroy America's experiment in popular government if politicians were to "enlarge and aggravate" it either by seeking to expand slavery or to attack it in the states.

Lincoln became increasingly worried around 1850 when he read John C. Calhoun's denunciations of the Declaration of Independence. When he read a similar denunciation by a Virginia clergyman, he grew more upset. Such things undermined his confidence because they showed that some Americans did not wish to approach the ideals of the Declaration of Independence; for some, they were no longer ideals at all. But these were the statements of a society directly interested in the preservation of the institution, and Lincoln did not become enough alarmed to aggravate the slave question. He began even to lose interest in politics.

The passage of Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Like many other prints of Lincoln published soon after his death, this one celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation as his greatest act.

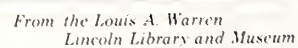


FIGURE 2. Charles Eberstadt noted fifty-two printed editions of the Emancipation Proclamation issued between 1862 and 1865. He called this one a “highly spirited Western edition embellished with four large slave scenes lithographed at the left and four freedom scenes at the right.”

in 1854 changed all this. Lincoln was startled when territory previously closed to slavery was opened to the possibility of its introduction by local vote. He was especially alarmed at the fact that this change was led by a Northerner with no direct interest in slavery to protect.

In 1841 Lincoln had seen a group of slaves on a steamboat being sold South from Kentucky to a harsher (so he assumed) slavery. Immediately after the trip, he noted the irony of their seeming contentment with their lot. They had appeared to be the happiest people on board. After the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he wrote about the same episode, still vivid to him, as "a continual torment to me." Slavery, he said, "has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable."

Lincoln repeatedly stated that slaveholders were no worse than Northerners would be in the same situation. Having inherited an undesirable but socially explosive political institution, Southerners made the best of a bad situation. Like all Americans before the Revolution, they had denounced Great Britain's forcing slavery on the colonies with the slave trade, and, even in the 1850s, they admitted the humanity of the Negro by despising those Southerners who dealt with the Negro as property, pure and simple — slave traders. But he feared that the ability of Northerners to see that slavery was morally wrong was in decline. This, almost as surely as disunion, could mean the end of the American experiment in freedom, for any argument for slavery which ignored the moral wrong of the institution could be used to enslave any man, white or black. If lighter men were to enslave darker men, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own." If superior intellect determined masters, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own." Once the moral distinction between slavery and freedom were forgotten, nothing could stop its spread. It was "founded in the selfishness of man's nature," and that selfishness could overcome any barriers of climate or geography.

By 1856 Lincoln was convinced that the "sentiment in favor of white slavery . . . prevailed in all the slave state papers, except those of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri and Maryland." The people of the South had "an immediate palpable and immensely great pecuniary interest" in the question; "while, with the people of the North, it is merely an abstract question of moral right." Unfortunately, the latter formed a looser bond than economic self-interest in two billion dollars worth of slaves. And the Northern ability to resist was steadily undermined by the moral indifference to slavery epitomized by Douglas's willingness to see slavery voted up or down in the territories. The Dred Scott decision in 1857 convinced Lincoln that the Kansas-Nebraska Act had been the beginning of a conspiracy to make slavery perpetual, national, and universal. His House-Divided Speech of 1858 and his famous debates with Douglas stressed the specter of a conspiracy to nationalize slavery.

Lincoln's claims in behalf of the slaves were modest and did not make much of the Negro's abilities outside of slavery. The Negro "is not my equal . . . in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment," Lincoln said, but "in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man, white or black." Lincoln objected to slavery primarily because it violated the doctrine of the equality of all men announced in the Declaration of Independence. "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*," Lincoln said. "This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

Lincoln had always worked on the assumption that the Union was more important than abolishing slavery. As long as the country was approaching the ideal of freedom for all men, even if it took a hundred years, it made no sense to destroy the freest country in the world. When it became apparent to Lincoln that the country might not be approaching that ideal, it somewhat confused his thinking. In 1854 he admitted that as "Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any GREAT evil, to avoid a GREATER one." As his fears of a conspiracy to nationalize

slavery increased, he ceased to make such statements. In the secession crisis he edged closer toward making liberty more important than Union. In New York City on February 20, 1861, President-elect Lincoln said:

There is nothing that can ever bring me willingly to consent to the destruction of this Union, under which . . . the whole country has acquired its greatness, unless it were to be that thing for which the Union itself was made. I understand a ship to be made for the carrying and preservation of the cargo, and so long as the ship can be saved, with the cargo, it should never be abandoned. This Union should likewise never be abandoned unless it fails and the probability of its preservation shall cease to exist without throwing the passengers and cargo overboard. So long, then, as it is possible that the prosperity and the liberties of the people can be preserved in the Union, it shall be my purpose at all times to preserve it.

The Civil War saw Lincoln move quickly to save the Union by stretching and, occasionally, violating the Constitution. Since he had always said that constitutional scruple kept him from bothering slavery in the states, it is clear that early in the war he was willing to go much farther to save the Union than he was willing to go to abolish slavery. Yet he interpreted it as his constitutional duty to save the Union, even if to do so he had to violate some small part of that very Constitution. There certainly was no constitutional duty to do anything about slavery. For over a year, he did not.

On August 22, 1862, Lincoln responded to criticism from Horace Greeley by stating his slavery policy:

If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time *save* slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time *destroy* slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do *less* whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do *more* whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of *official* duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed *personal* wish that all men every where could be free.

The Emancipation Proclamation, announced just one month later, was avowedly a military act, and Lincoln boasted of his consistency almost two years later by saying, "I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery."

Nevertheless, he had changed his mind in some regards. Precisely one year before he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had criticized General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation for Missouri by saying that "as to . . . the liberation of slaves" it was "*purely political*, and not within the range of *military* law, or necessity."

If a commanding General finds a necessity to seize the farm of a private owner, for a pasture, an encampment, or a fortification, he has the right to do so, and to so hold it, as long as the necessity lasts; and this is within military law, because within military necessity. But to say the farm shall no longer belong to the owner, or his heirs forever; and this as well when the farm is not needed for military purposes as when it is, is purely political, without the savor of military law about it. And the same is true of slaves. If the General needs them, he can seize them, and use them; but when the need is past, it is not for him to fix their permanent future

condition. That must be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamations. The proclamation in the point in question, is simply "dictatorship." It assumes that the general may do *anything* he pleases—confiscate the lands and free the slaves of *loyal* people, as well as of disloyal ones. And going the whole figure I have no doubt would be more popular with some thoughtless people, than that which has been done! But I cannot assume this reckless position; nor allow others to assume it on my responsibility. You speak of it as being the only means of *saving* the government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the government. Can it be pretended that it is any longer the government of the U.S. — any government of Constitution and laws, — wherein a General, or a President, may make permanent rules of property by proclamation?

I do not say Congress might not with propriety pass a law, on the point, just such as General Fremont proclaimed. I do not say I might not, as a member of Congress, vote for it. What I object to, is, that I as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the government.

Critics called this inconsistency; Lincoln's admirers have called it "growth." Whatever the case, just as Lincoln's love of Union caused him to handle the Constitution somewhat roughly, so his hatred of slavery led him, more slowly, to treat the Constitution in a manner inconceivable to him in 1861. Emancipation, if somewhat more slowly, was allowed about the same degree of constitutional latitude the Union earned in Lincoln's policies.

The destruction of slavery never became the avowed object of the war, but by insisting on its importance, militarily, to saving the Union, Lincoln made it constitutionally beyond criticism and, in all that really mattered, an aim of the war. In all practical applications, it was a condition of peace — and was so announced in the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, and repeatedly defended in administration statements thereafter. He reinforced this fusion of aims by insisting that the Confederacy was an attempt to establish "a new Nation, . . . with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery," thus making the enemy and slavery one and the same.

Only once did Lincoln apparently change his mind. In the desperately gloomy August of 1864, when defeat for the administration seemed certain, Lincoln bowed to pressure from Henry J. Raymond long enough to draft a letter empowering Raymond to propose peace with Jefferson Davis on the condition of reunion alone, all other questions (including slavery, of course) to be settled by a convention

afterwards. Lincoln never finished the letter, and the offer was never made. Moreover, as things looked in August, Lincoln was surrendering only what he could not keep anyway. He was so convinced that the Democratic platform would mean the loss of the Union, that he vowed in secret to work to save the Union before the next President came into office in March. He could hope for some cooperation from Democrats in this, as they professed to be as much in favor of Union as the Republicans. Without the Union, slavery could not be abolished anyhow, and the Democrats were committed to restoring slavery.

Lincoln had made abolition a party goal in 1864 by making support for the Thirteenth Amendment a part of the Republican platform. The work he performed for that measure after his election proved that his antislavery views had not abated. Near the end of his life, he repeated in a public speech one of his favorite arguments against slavery: "Whenever [I] hear any one, arguing for slavery I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. This Indianapolis edition of the Emancipation Proclamation, published in 1886, obviously copied the edition in Figure 2. Note, however, that the harsher scenes of slavery are removed — a sign of the post-Reconstruction political ethos.

LINCOLN'S POLITICAL EDUCATION

President Lincoln gets high marks for political skill from almost all modern historians, but few have attempted to account for this skill. It often seems as though Lincoln burst from his mother's womb as a full-fledged politico, ready to wheel and deal, bestow patronage, and walk into a strong Presidency. Like everything else in Lincoln's life, however, political savvy came by dint of a gradual and difficult learning experience. In fact, Lincoln's political education may have been more difficult than his learning experience as a writer, a lawyer, or an orator. Politics can only be learned the hard way.

After his original apprenticeship under "Jerry Sly," the nickname of Lincoln's first law partner and political mentor John Todd Stuart, Lincoln learned the toughest lessons from Zachary Taylor. This is not to say that Lincoln had the close relationship with Taylor which he had with Stuart. Lincoln's political involvement with the Taylor Presidency, however, brought with it some stinging lessons the young Illinois legislator never forgot.

The Whig party in part grew from criticism of the organizational methods of the Democratic party, and Whigs, therefore, tended to be reluctant to adopt the organizational methods of the Democrats. Among Illinois Whigs, Lincoln and his close political allies like Anson G. Henry were leaders in urging better organization. Lincoln knew that this was the only hope of success for the party in his overwhelmingly Democratic state. In 1840 Lincoln wrote a confidential circular for the Whig State Committee suggesting that the way to "overthrow the *trained bands* that are opposed to us, whose salaried officers are ever on the watch, and whose misguided followers are ever ready to obey their smallest commands" was "to organize the whole State." The letter recommended the establishment of committees in every county to canvass voters to determine their preferences. When



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Zachary Taylor.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. John Todd Stuart.

Democrats seized on the circular as a campaign issue, Lincoln responded: "They set us the example of organization; and we, in self defence, are driven into it. . . . Let them *disband* their double-drilled-army of 'forty thousand office holders.'" Lincoln continued to "justify . . . urge . . . organization on the score of necessity." Still, Lincoln was Whig enough to tell John Todd Stuart, while advising him on local appointments after William Henry Harrison's election as President, "I am, as you know, opposed to removals to make places for our friends." Lincoln insisted on having some reason beyond mere partisan identification for removing officeholders.

Lincoln's Whig campaign address in 1843 continued to stress the necessity of organization. He favored the convention system for nominations, and he urged Whigs to run candidates for Congress in every district in the state, "regardless of the chances of success." He was still ahead of average Whig sentiment on these questions and "got thunder" as his "reward" for writing the address. When he served in the United States House of Representatives (1847-1849), Lincoln did what he could to gain offices and appointments for Whig allies, but there was little he could do. President James K. Polk was a Democrat and "could hardly be expected to give them to whigs, at the solicitation of a whig Member of Congress." Things changed with the election of Whig Zachary Taylor. Lincoln promised offices, for example, to Walter Davis: "When I last saw you I said, that if the distribution of the offices should fall into my hands, you should have *something*." In the end he shared a good deal of the power of distribution with incoming Whig Congressman Edward D. Baker of Galena. When he recommended a Whig appointee as Springfield's postmaster, Lincoln admitted that the only objection to the Democratic incumbent was that he was "an active partizan in opposition to us." He would "give no opinion . . . as to whether he should or should not be removed." He did not say, as he had to Stuart almost a decade before, that such men should not be removed.

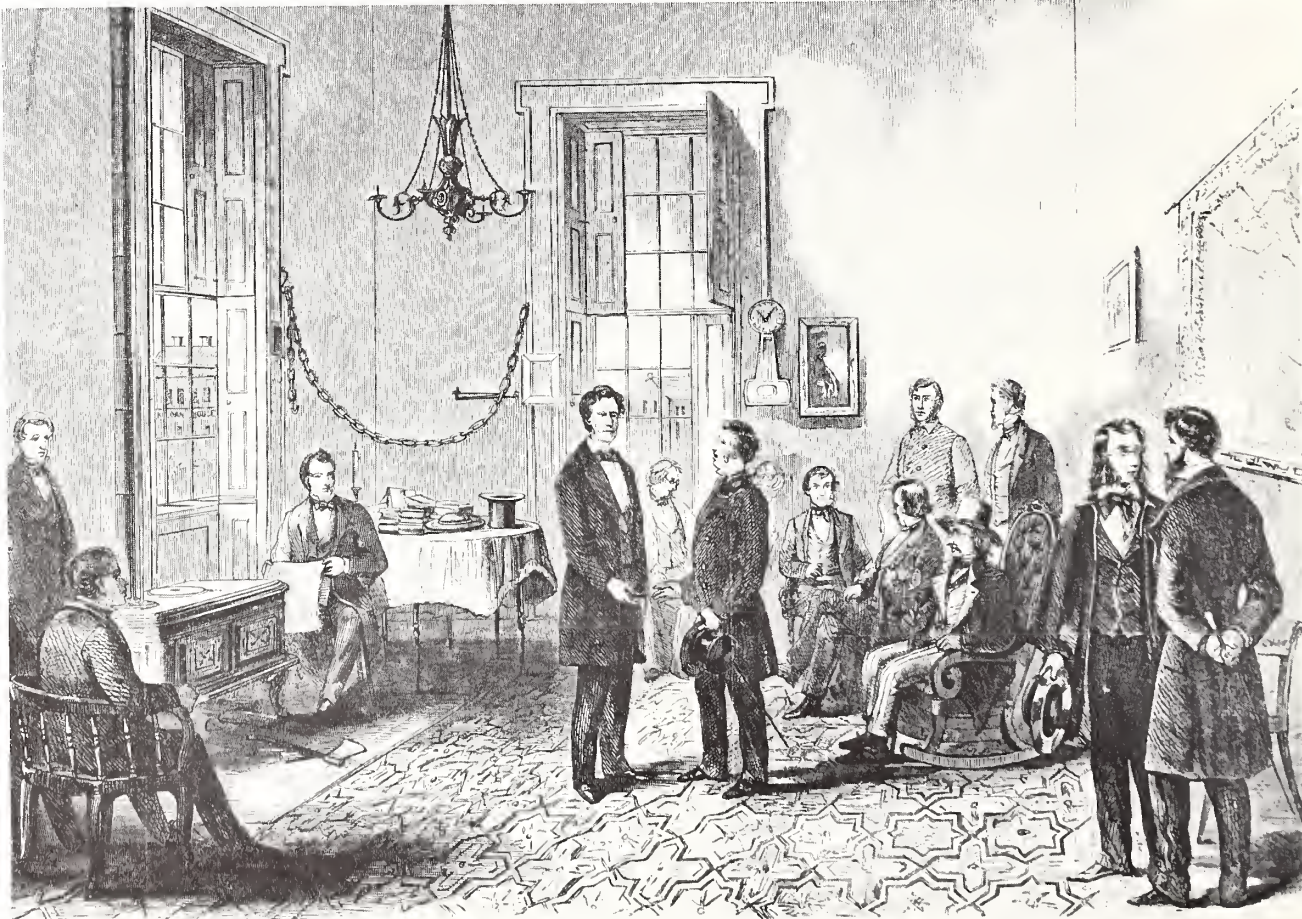
Since he did not run for reelection, Lincoln himself began to think of receiving a patronage appointment. But, he said frankly, "there is nothing about me which would authorize me to think of a first class office; and a second class one would not compensate me for being snarled at by others who want it for themselves." Eventually, Lincoln did become an aspirant for appointment to the lucrative General Land Office. He admitted that his major competitor, Justin Butterfield of Chicago, was "qualified to do the duties of the office," as were "quite one hundred Illinoisans." Lincoln argued that the office "should be so given as to gratify our friends, and to stimulate them to future exertions." Butterfield "fought for Mr. Clay against Gen Taylor to the bitter end," and it would "now mortify me deeply," Lincoln said, "if Gen. Taylors administration shall trample all my wishes in the dust."

Taylor's weak partisanship gave Lincoln a new appreciation for the importance of the patronage. Taylor, Lincoln realized, "will not go the doctrine of removals very strongly." Leaving many Democratic incumbents in office, Lincoln insisted, gave "the greater reason, when an office or job is not already in democratic hands, that it should be given to a Whig." If "less than this is done for our friends, I think they will have just cause to complain." The appointment of Butterfield doubtless accelerated Lincoln's appreciation for distributing the patronage to friends as the ultimate bond of party loyalty.

Lincoln was out of office and largely uninvolved in patronage matters for more than a decade before becoming President in 1861. He brought with him to the office the traditional habits of a good party man, toughened by the

unhappy experience of the Taylor administration and heightened by the organizational needs of a new party, the Republican, now enjoying its first taste of national office. Lincoln was widely criticized for spending too much time on petty patronage matters while the Nation fell apart into civil war. However, the Republican party was only six years old and was as yet a loose coalition of former Whigs, former Democrats, and former Know Nothings. Lincoln had to exercise great care in distributing the patronage to keep this new coalition together. For this task Lincoln was peculiarly well equipped, for, though no one appreciated loyalty more than he, Lincoln was also free of any vindictive spirit. When Republicans who had supported other candidates than Lincoln at the nominating convention in 1860 worriedly wrote him, Lincoln responded that such things were "not even remembered by me for any practical purpose." He would not go "back of the convention, to make distinctions among its' members."

Personal loyalty was one thing, but party loyalty was quite another. Lincoln initiated the most sweeping removal of federal officeholders in the country's history up to that time. Of 1,520 Presidential officeholders, 1,195 were removed; since most Southern offices were left unfilled, this was almost a complete overturn. He appointed Republicans to almost all of these jobs. Lincoln's administration, the President explained frankly in 1862, "distributed to it's party friends as nearly all the civil patronage as any administration ever did." Lincoln never forgot the lessons of the weakly partisan Taylor administration.



RECEIVING HIS VISITORS IN THE GOVERNOR'S ROOM IN THE STATE HOUSE, SPRINGFIELD, ILL.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, MR. HENRI LOUIS.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. This comes as close as any contemporary picture to showing Lincoln in the act of distributing offices. After his election in 1860, Lincoln established a temporary office in the Illinois State Capitol to receive visitors. Needless to say, most of these visitors were seeking offices from the new administration either for themselves or their friends.



Lincoln Lore

January, 1981

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1715

The Political Life Of New Salem, Illinois

Lincoln's earliest political surroundings have always somewhat baffled scholars. The reasons for this are many and varied. Inadequate documentation and Whiggery's marginal existence as almost a subculture in Democratic Illinois are two factors. A third, perhaps more important, is the unpopularity of the Whig party among historians. Much of the best work on Lincoln was produced at a time when historians were prejudiced against the Whigs. Most writers liked Lincoln well enough, but they disliked the party to which he devoted the greater part of his political life (he was a Whig twice as long as he was a Republican).

Only recently have historians come to have a greater appreciation for the importance, one might almost say the vision, of the Whig party. G.S. Boritt comes immediately to mind for those who work in the Lincoln field, but there are others, such as Daniel Walker Howe, who have been giving the Whigs a fairer shake. This new work has gained attention and made historians think. It has not yet stemmed the tide, and more students should be reevaluating Lincoln's early political environment.

All in all, the effect of the modern unpopularity of Whiggery on the study of Lincoln's early career has been to keep the number of such studies small and to emphasize Lincoln's personal popularity. Nowhere has this emphasis been more pronounced than in the work on Lincoln in New Salem.

Studies of New Salem rarely focus on the political life of the town in which Lincoln forged his early career. Historians have generally shied away from characterizing the town as Whig or Democratic. Most say only that it was democratic (with a small "d") and that this openness accounts for

Lincoln's opportunity to have a political career despite his "defective" education, his inability to settle into a successful vocation, and his penniless and debt-ridden economic status. The beginnings of Lincoln's career in the Illinois legislature seem to represent a triumph of personal popularity and of the American political system. That it was also a triumph of one political party over another rarely gains mention, much less careful consideration.

Here inadequate documentation is *not* a problem. The opportunity to understand Lincoln's political career before the 1850s is probably greater than for any other of America's political giants. Illinois's voters showed their preference at the polls orally, and clerks carefully marked how each citizen voted. Therefore, we know in Lincoln's case precisely—by name—who voted for him and against him. Knowledge like this is unobtainable even for twentieth-century politicians or contemporary elections. We know for sure who voted for Lincoln, something we can never know in the cases of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, or even Ronald Reagan.

Who Voted for Lincoln?

The records do not exist for every precinct in every election, but a substantial number have survived. The poll books for the election of August 1, 1836, in New Salem precinct still exist. Lincoln was running for reelection to the Illinois House of Representatives. Sangamon County, of which New Salem was still a part, was to choose seven Representatives, and each voter could vote for as many as seven House candidates. Voters also chose a Congressman, a state senator, and

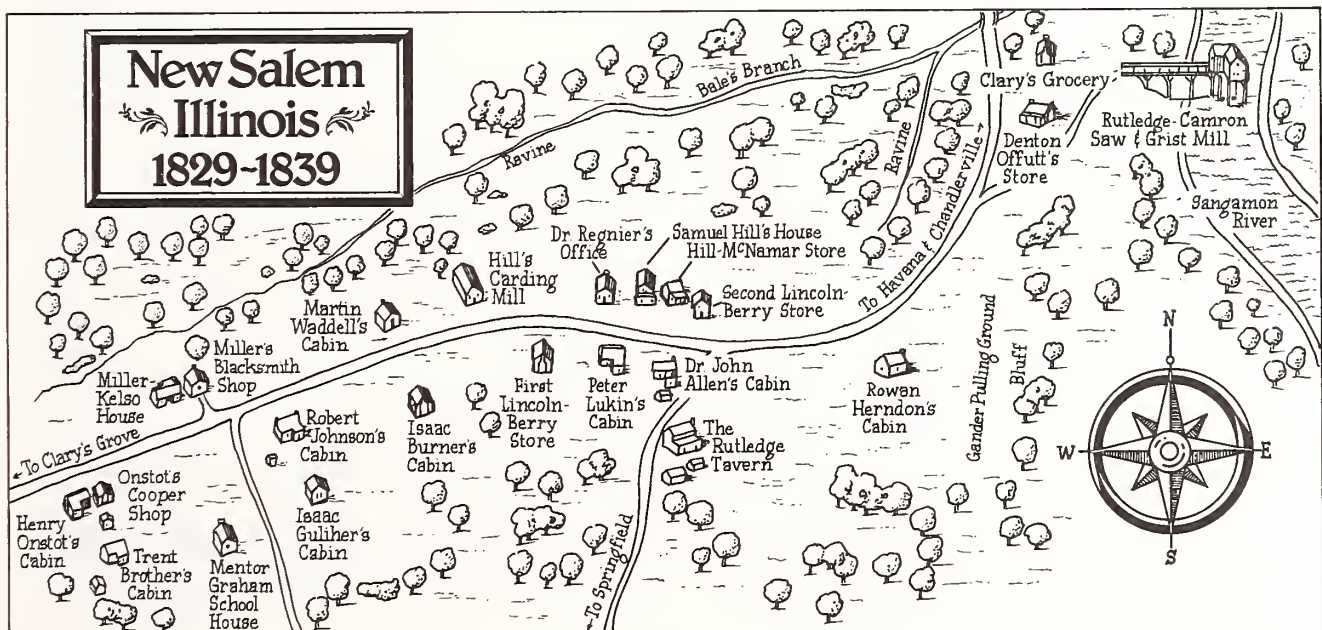


FIGURE 1. Map of Lincoln's home town from 1831 to 1837.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

various county officials. For this election, incidentally, there were two New Salem precinct polling places, a fact not previously mentioned in the literature. Only one of them was in tiny New Salem proper. The other was outside of the town, probably to the west and perhaps to the northwest. Both polling places drew voters from a wide area, and the polling place in New Salem itself attracted many more than the 25 to 50 voters who lived in the town.

The New Salem poll books show that it was a Whig town. John Todd Stuart, the Whig candidate for the United States House of Representatives, gained 86 votes to Democrat William L. May's 59. In the race for the state senate, Whig Job Fletcher outpolled Democrat Moses K. Anderson 73 to 67. In the races for the lower house, five of the seven Whigs gained more votes than any Democrat. Lincoln led the pack with a whopping 107 votes from the 145 voters who came to the polling place. He was followed by William Elkin with 84, Ninian W. Edwards with 84, John Dawson with 82, Dan Stone with 81, Robert L. Wilson with 69, and Andrew McCormick with 67. Lincoln students, of course, recognize these as members of the Long Nine. Thomas Wynne led the unsuccessful Democrats with 71 votes. He was a local man, and no other Democrat topped any Whig's votes in New Salem.

Thus the New Salem poll books also reveal Lincoln's immense local personal popularity, a factor properly noted by historians of the past. One should not ignore the partisan cast of New Salem, however. The peculiar system of voting on many candidates to represent Sangamon County in the legislature allowed for considerable ticket-splitting. Likewise, the rather tentative nature of party formation in Illinois at this date meant that the discipline or regularity of the voters was weaker than it would be in the 1840s, when ticket-splitting became rare. Richard P. McCormick, the outstanding expert on the formation of the Whig and Democratic parties characterizes the party situation in Illinois before 1835 as "chaos." Preparation for the 1836 Presidential election served to coalesce the voters somewhat and saw the Democrats institute a convention system for

nominations. The opposition to the Democrats was still only loosely organized and did not put together a modern party organization until about 1840. Thus the degree of party regularity in New Salem was substantial under the conditions. One might say that in 1836 there were about 80 Whigs and about 60 Democrats.

Modern-day visitors to New Salem State Park might get a new feeling about the quaint pioneer village as they meander through it by keeping in mind the Whiggish cast of the town itself. Of course, the reconstructed village does not represent the town at one particular time. It represents a sort of average of a six-year period. Different people lived in the log houses at different times, and it is not possible to identify the politics of all its inhabitants.

Nevertheless, entering the village from the west, one first

encounters Henry Onstot's cabin. In 1836 he voted for Stuart, Lincoln, and the other six Whig candidates for the lower house. The Trent brothers' cabin to the south was full of Democrats. Alexander, Henry, and William Trent voted for May and, with one exception, for the Democratic candidates for the lower house. Alexander Trent, a veteran of Lincoln's company in the Black Hawk War, split his ticket to vote for his old captain. Joshua Miller and John A. "Jack" Kelso married sisters and lived in a double house north of Onstot's cooper shop. Both men were Whigs. Martin Waddell, the hatter, lived next door to Miller's blacksmith shop. Waddell was also a Whig. To the south of these residences lay Robert Johnson's cabin, Isaac Guliher's cabin, and Mentor Graham's schoolhouse. Johnson, a wheelwright and cabinetmaker, voted Whig. Guliher did not vote; perhaps he had moved on from New Salem. Graham lived outside town, but he came to town to vote for Stuart, Lincoln, and five Whig candidates for the lower house. He also voted for Thomas Wynne, a Democrat, for the state legislature.

Isaac Burner did not vote in New Salem in 1836. Alexander Ferguson, who had succeeded Peter Lukins as the local shoemaker, was a Democrat. The town's leading businessman Samuel Hill, Dartmouth-educated Dr. John Allen, and Dr. Francis Regnier were Whigs. The rest of the cabins on the east side of town were shops except the old Herndon cabin, the occupants of which in 1836 are unknown.

The Myth of the Clary's Grove Boys

The other New Salem precinct in 1836 was less solidly Whig. Lincoln got 50 of its 76 votes, but May edged Stuart, 40 to 34. In this area of Sangamon County, Lincoln's personal popularity did triumph over local political preference. The names of the voters at this unlocated poll include many of those associated with the Clary's Grove, Concord, and Sandridge areas.

A special mythology surrounds these residents of New Salem's outskirts. The "Clary's Grove boys," as they are called, were representatives of what some historians call the



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Joshua Miller's reconstructed blacksmith shop in New Salem.

first frontier. They were rough, fun-loving, and boisterous men of rather unsteady habits. Lincoln, the artisans, doctors, and businessmen of New Salem were men of the more settled second frontier. Lincoln's ability to capture the friendship of the Clary's Grove boys has always gained considerable attention from his biographers. First, it really was important. As members of his company in the Black Hawk War in 1832, the Clary's Grove boys had a hand in Lincoln's first political success: his election as captain of the unit. Second, the way he gained their respect—the famous wrestling match with Jack Armstrong—is the anecdotal stuff of which readable biographies are made. Unlike some important events, this one offers the bonus of making a good story.

Finally, Lincoln's friendship with the Clary's Grove boys has been the focus of much attention because of the peculiar importance of the American West to historians in the period when much of the great writing on Lincoln occurred. In the 1890s, Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis" identified American democracy and individualism with the West. The frontier was supposed to be the cutting edge of the experience that made America, America and not a pale imitation of the European culture from which most Americans stemmed. For Lincoln to capture the hearts and minds of the Clary's Grove boys was vital to the process by which he maintained his status as the ideal American statesman to most historians. This showed that, despite Lincoln's choice of the law as a vocation and his political and personal friendships with bankers and businessmen, he was linked to the vital experience that forged American democracy.

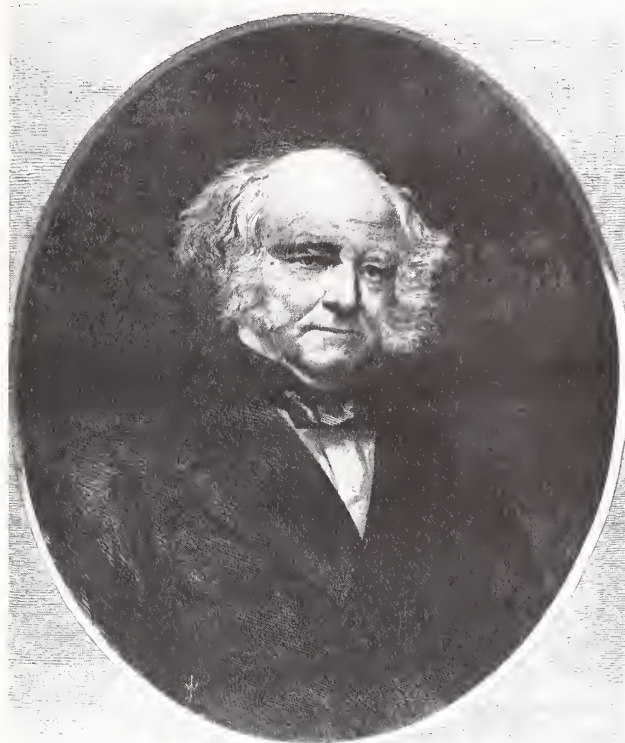
Scholarship has moved on since those times, and the frontier experience has greatly diminished in importance in the works of American history. The residue of this once important story remains in Lincoln biographies. Oscar and Lilian Handlin's recent *Abraham Lincoln and the Union* notes that Lincoln was "Equally at ease with the boys in the Clary's Grove gang and with the Reverend Cameron." A more important book, Stephen B. Oates's fine *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, carries the idea a bit farther. Describing Lincoln's campaign for the legislature in 1836, Oates says, "On the campaign trail, Jack Armstrong and the Clary Grove boys sang Lincoln's praises and helped keep order at his political rallies." Oates merely states explicitly what is implied in most of the Lincoln literature that preceded his book.

Jack Armstrong may have campaigned in 1836, but he did not vote, either in the state election in August or in the national election in November. And the Clarys were certainly Democrats. John, Spencer, and Zack Clary voted in the New Salem precinct in 1836. Spencer and Zack voted for William L. May and for the seven Democrats seeking seats in the Illinois House. John Clary split his ticket, voting for Stuart, Lincoln, and three other Whig aspirants to the legislature as well as for four Democrats running for the legislature. The Clarys voted in the poll outside New Salem. The other families associated with the Clarys have never been precisely identified, and the Clarys and Armstrongs may not have spoken for all the "boys." Nevertheless, this is not the stuff of which loyal campaign workers are made, and it seems almost certain that the Armstrongs and Clarys were no part of Lincoln's canvass for the Illinois House of Representatives in 1836. Politically, Lincoln was much more at home on the streets of New Salem than in Clary's Grove.

Whigs and Democrats in the Developing West

New Salem was solidly Whig. In the Presidential election the following November, the town's voters gave 65 votes to Hugh Lawson White and only 34 to Martin Van Buren (only one poll book for the precinct exists). Dr. Allen, Caleb Carman (at whose house, probably the Trents' former home, the poll was located), Robert Johnson, Jack Kelso, Lincoln, Joshua Miller, Dr. Regnier, and Martin Waddell voted for White. Alexander Ferguson and the Trents (who had apparently moved outside town) voted Democratic. Mentor Graham, who also resided outside New Salem, voted Whig.

Lincoln left New Salem for Springfield before the next election. In 1838 he again ran successfully for the Illinois legislature. New Salem had changed. Its citizens shared with most other residents of northwestern Sangamon County a



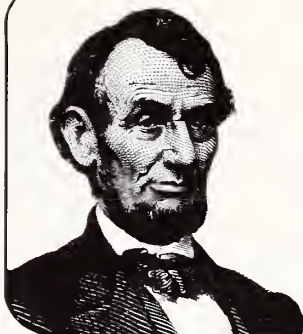
From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. New Yorker Martin Van Buren's lack of popularity in the West spurred Whig organization in 1836.

desire to form a new county with, of course, a new county seat. Lincoln and the rest of the Long Nine, busy with internal improvements bills and the drive to move the state capital to Springfield, were unresponsive. New Salem's residents registered their dismay at the polls in 1838. The Whigs lost ignominiously. Lincoln led the Whig candidates for the lower house of the legislature with a paltry 31 votes out of 122 (almost double the total of any other Whig candidate for the Illinois House but not even a third of what the Democratic candidates got). Even Lincoln's local popularity could not overcome the disappointment of New Salem's citizens. John Todd Stuart, who was immune from the county-division conflict in Washington, ran ahead of Lincoln with 39 votes but well behind his Democratic opponent, Stephen A. Douglas, who gained 81 votes. A few remained faithful to Lincoln (Waddell, Kelso, Carman, Miller, and Graham), but even they split their tickets, usually voting for Democrats for the other legislative seats. Feeling for division of the county all but obliterated party regularity.

Lincoln was gone from New Salem by then, and his popularity and that of the Whig party in the rest of Sangamon County swept him to victory anyway. It is the experience before 1838 that is important, and it really is important. This is not a quaint exercise meant to add some of the bright color of partisanship to your next tour of New Salem State Park, though lack of attention to party politics is a notable failing of historical reconstructions, which usually ignore partisanship for the sake of a bland patriotism. This is a step in the reconstruction of Lincoln's early political environment.

That environment is looking more Whiggish every day. We know that Lincoln's father was a Whig and that his cousin was a Whig. We now know that the village in which he chose to make his independent way in the world was Whig. There is no anomaly in Lincoln's affiliation with the Whig party. The tendency to associate the frontier with democracy and democracy with the Democratic party is a hangover from the days when the West was thought to be the key to the American experience. Lincoln was a son of America's frontier, all right, but the West was politically and socially complex. When Lincoln moved to New Salem, he left his Whig home for a Whig town.



Lincoln Lore

March, 1981

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1717

THE WHIG FAITHFUL IN SPRINGFIELD

When Abraham Lincoln left New Salem for Springfield in 1837, he left one Whig town for another. The Whigs of central Illinois would be Lincoln's major preoccupation for over two decades. As late as 1858, he was fighting Stephen A. Douglas for the votes of the "Old Whigs," then thought to constitute the essential swing vote in Illinois's senatorial contest. Illinois no longer had oral voting after 1848, and studying the Whigs in the 1850s is a matter of inference, correlation, and guesswork. The poll books of the 1840s, however, allow historians to find out who Illinois's Whigs really were.

Since the poll books list voters by name and note their votes, it is possible to draw up a list of the Whigs in Springfield. By searching for their names in the census records of Sangamon County, one can discover the age, place of birth, occupation, value of real estate, and (to some extent) location of these Whigs. It is a decidedly laborious undertaking and not without its own elements of imprecision. The census occurred only at ten-year intervals. Elections occurred throughout the decades, and it is no mean feat to find voters in a census taken two or three or more years before or after the election. Chirography adds maddening obstacles to the path of the student of voting. The clerks who recorded the voters' names sometimes wrote legibly and sometimes did not. From election to election, they identified the same voter differently. The "Caleb Burchell" of 1848 is pretty clearly the "C. Burchell" of 1846 and the "Caleb Burchatt" of the 1850 census, but what does one make of the many John Smiths? Is "Jo Smith" also "J.M. Smith"? The census taker adds still another batch of penmanship, inconsistency, and idiosyncrasy in recording names and initials. All forms of voting analysis have their pitfalls, and the poll books at least offer a way to know how the individuals in Lincoln's Springfield voted. It seems well worth the effort.

An analysis of the congressional elections in Springfield in 1843, 1846, and 1848 provides us our first really intimate

glimpse of the voting behavior which most affected Lincoln's life. This *Lincoln Lore* will focus on what might be called persistent Whig voters in Lincoln's Springfield. By comparing the lists of Whig voters in the three elections with each other, I have found those voters who voted for the Whig candidate for Congress at least twice in those three elections and who never voted any other way. Nineteenth-century voters were notoriously regular and rarely switched parties, so this latter qualification excludes only a few voters who switched parties or who scratched both parties' congressional candidates while voting for minor offices.

Interestingly enough, this qualification does exclude Abraham Lincoln from the list. He was so miffed in 1843 at John Hardin's nomination for Congress that he voted for minor offices but did not state a preference for Hardin or his Demo-

cratic opponent, James A. McDougall. In 1848 Lincoln was in Washington, serving his own congressional term, and he failed to vote in the election which made Democrat Thomas L. Harris Lincoln's successor in the House of Representatives. Therefore, Lincoln did not vote twice in these three elections for the Whig candidate for Congress, and he fails to be a persistent Whig voter by the technical standards of this study.

Lincoln's case also provides an example of the problems involved in using the census. In the 1850



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. An illustrator's depiction of a Whig rally in 1840 (from James Baldwin's *Abraham Lincoln: A True Life*).

census, the one used for this study, Lincoln is listed as a forty-year-old attorney-at-law, born in Kentucky. The census taker made no estimate of the value of his real estate. Because Lincoln eventually became a famous man, we know a great deal about him—including the fact that by 1850 he owned his home and the lot it sat on as well as other property. Without this special knowledge, however, one would have to list Lincoln as a voter with no real estate. The census is inaccurate in this case and likely so in others. It is, however, the best evidence at hand for the myriads of more obscure Whigs in Springfield.

The three elections used for this study showed the following results in Sangamon County:

1843	Total 2898	John J. Hardin (W) 1694	James A. McDougall (D) 1190	Other 14
1846	2394	Abraham Lincoln (W) 1535	Peter Cartwright (D) 845	Other 14
1848	3035	Stephen T. Logan (W) 1649	Thomas L. Harris (D) 1386	

For comparison, the results of the Presidential elections in Sangamon County in the same period were:

1840	Total 3249	William H. Harrison (W) 2000	Martin Van Buren (D) 1249	
1844	3208	Henry Clay (W) 1837	James K. Polk (D) 1371	
1848	3326	Zachary Taylor (W) 1943	Lewis Cass (D) 1336	Other 47

Springfield's totals for the three congressional contests were:

1843	Total 1208	John J. Hardin (W) 727	James A. McDougall (D) 473	Other 8
1846	1383	Abraham Lincoln (W) 919	Peter Cartwright (D) 450	Other 14
1848	1553	Stephen T. Logan (W) 888	Thomas L. Harris (D) 665	

One page of the 1843 poll books is missing, leaving the names and votes of 29 voters in that election a mystery.

Of the Springfield citizens who voted for the Whig candidate for Congress in 1843, 1846, and 1848, 352 were persistent Whig voters. Of those 352, 103 were not listed in the 1850 census or in John C. Powers's *History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois*. Some information was available on 249 of the persistent Whig voters in Springfield's congressional elections, but age, place of birth, occupation, and value of real estate were not available for all of these (because of omissions in the census or lack of information in Powers's book). In order to describe these voters, one needs to define a group of Springfield citizens for comparison. A similar group of persistent Democratic voters was established. Of the Springfield citizens who voted for the Democratic candidate for Congress in 1843, 1846, and 1848, 160 were persistent Democratic voters, that is, voted twice or more for the Democratic candidate for Congress and did not vote for the Whig candidate in any of the three elections. Among the persistent Democrats, 101 could be located in the 1850 census or in Powers's work. Full information was not available on all of these, either.

What, then, were the Whigs like? Of the 245 Whigs and 92 Democrats in the study for whom information on place of birth was available, the voters were distributed thus:

Place of Birth	Whigs	Democrats
Alabama	1	0
Canada	2	1
Connecticut	6	2
Delaware	2	1
England	4	1
Illinois	14	2
Indiana	3	2
Ireland	3	12
Kentucky	53	15
Maine	0	2
Maryland	8	3
Massachusetts	16	0
Missouri	2	0
New Hampshire	1	1
New Jersey	17	4
New York	21	10
North Carolina	8	4
Ohio	11	4
Pennsylvania	20	11
Scotland	3	1
South Carolina	3	2
Tennessee	6	4
Virginia	35	10
Vermont	6	0

Persistent Whig voters in Springfield, by contrast with persistent Democratic voters, were (1) more likely to have come from Kentucky or Virginia, (2) much less likely to be Irish, (3) slightly less likely to hail from slave states other than Vir-

ginia or Kentucky, and (4) more likely to hail from New England. All of these conclusions are consistent with other studies of the differences between Whigs and Democrats except number 1. This is intriguing, especially in light of the importance of Kentuckians in the early settlement and formation of Illinois. A substantial number of those who gave Virginia as their birthplace had probably spent some time in Kentucky before settling in Illinois. The pattern of migration from Virginia to Kentucky to Illinois was common, and an institutional effect of it was the custom of oral voting itself. Oral voting persisted in Virginia until 1867 and in Kentucky until 1891. Somehow, those Kentuckians who migrated to central Illinois were more likely to become Whigs than Democrats. This suggests that the importance of Lincoln's roots cannot be overestimated. Born in Kentucky, Lincoln courted women born in Kentucky, joined law partnerships with three Kentuckians, married a Kentuckian, had a Kentuckian as his best friend, and voted as other Kentuckians in central Illinois tended to vote.

Breaking the voters down by occupation tends to show more similarities than differences between Whigs and Democrats. The reason for this is probably the factor of persistence in voting. Those who voted more steadily than their peers were obviously a steadier lot in what we might call their "lifestyle" today. The occupations listed in the census ranged from book binders to speculators, carriage trimmers to confectioners, and clock peddlars to mayors. Using the categories suggested by Merle Curti in *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County*, as modified by Don Harrison Doyle in *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70*, one finds an occupation distribution for persistent voters as follows:

	Whig	Democratic
Business-Professional	46	18
Skilled Workers	64	29
Unskilled Workers	7	17
None	3	2

This distribution excludes the farmers, who constituted by far the largest single occupation even among Springfield's voters



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Lincoln's first stump speech, as shown in Elbridge S. Brooks's *The True Story of Abraham Lincoln, the American: Told for Boys and Girls*.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. The American electorate was overwhelmingly rural in the 1840s.

(the precincts were apparently large and included much of the rural area around Springfield). Thus of the 243 persistent Whig voters whose occupations could be established from the 1850 census, 123 were farmers. The result for the Democrats was similar, if not quite so striking: among 97 persistent voters with identifiable occupations, 31 were farmers.

The fact that most nonfarm persistent voters were businessmen, professionals, or skilled workers—whether they were Democrats or Whigs—is not surprising. The more successful people were more likely to remain longer in town to vote and to be recorded by the census taker. The fact that unskilled workers made up a larger proportion of the Democratic voters than the Whigs is congruent with the findings of those studies which say the Democrats appealed more to the lower orders in society than the Whigs. More surprising is the ability of the development-minded Whigs to appeal to farmers. Of course, in a society made up overwhelmingly of farmers—as the United States was in the 1840s—no political party could long exist without winning farmers' votes. Still, given the Democrats' essentially agrarian appeal, one must find the Whigs' ability to attract farmers a persuasive index of the Whigs' ability to attract all kinds of people to their program of economic development.

Steady voters were a relatively prosperous lot. Remaining in the same place for a substantial period of time brought economic success in the burgeoning American West, and economic success made the Westerner more likely to stay put. The average value of real estate reported for farmers who were persistent Whig voters was \$2134. For Democratic farmers who were persistent voters, it was \$1862. Excluding those farmers with no reported real estate value—probably farm laborers or tenants, one finds the Whigs with an average of \$2698 and the Democrats with an average of \$2510. One of the Whig farmers, James M. Bradford, was a man of conspicuous wealth in real estate: \$15,000 reported in the census. Excluding him, the Whig average was \$2016, still more than the Democratic average of \$1862.

Statisticians usually find it more revealing to classify wealth by categories. Doyle used a scheme which divided Jacksonville's citizens into those with \$0 property value, \$1 to \$999 value, \$1000 to \$4999 value, and \$5000 and up. Adapting this scheme to Springfield's persistent voters who were farmers, one derives the following distribution of wealth in real estate:

	Whig	Democratic
\$5000 or more	12	3
\$1000 to \$4999	58	16
\$1 to \$999	11	4
\$0	29	8

The distribution of real estate was strikingly similar for Whig and Democratic farmers. 52.7% of the Whigs and 51.6% of the Democrats reported real estate value from \$1000 to \$4999. 26.3% of the Whigs and 25.8% of the Democrats listed as farmers had no real estate reported in the census. Even the wealthiest farmers, listed with more than \$5000 in real estate,

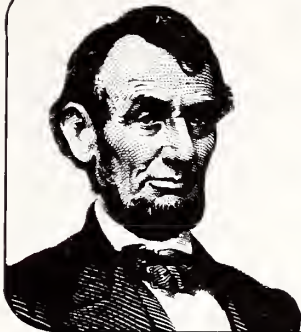
were about equally represented among the Whigs (10.9%) and the Democrats (9.7%).

These findings are preliminary ones. Much more can and will be done with the information derived from Illinois's poll books. The conditions for inclusion in this study did much, one suspects, to draw the Whig and Democratic voters closer together, statistically. Conclusions must be tentative at best. There are, however, interesting clues for further studies of a similar nature. If one is looking for the roots of Whiggery in central Illinois, Kentucky and Virginia are obvious places to begin. Any tendency to think of Whigs as the commercial classes must certainly contend with the fact of their obvious ability to appeal to farmers in the environs of Springfield. These are modest

statements, nothing more than clues, perhaps. But the careful historical detective will ignore them only at the peril of pursuing false leads that will take him to blind alleys. It is always better to play the percentages.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Detail of an Illinois poll book for the 1843 election. The voters' names are at the left; candidates' names are at the top.



Lincoln Lore

May, 1981

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1719

BEEN TO SPRINGFIELD LATELY?

The answer every Lincoln enthusiast would like to be able to give is, yes. Of all the Lincoln sites in the country, none is as important as Springfield. Lincoln's home, his tomb, his law office, the legislature in which he served, the state supreme court before which he argued, and the railroad station from which he departed for Washington are in Springfield. The Illinois State Historical Library contains the research materials that all Lincoln students want and need to read. The whole environment is invigorating and always serves to spur enthusiasm for research on the life of America's most important President.

Springfield's ambience has always been conducive to learning about and appreciating Abraham Lincoln's life. Those of you who have not been to Springfield lately are in for a pleasant surprise when you return to this Lincoln mecca. The

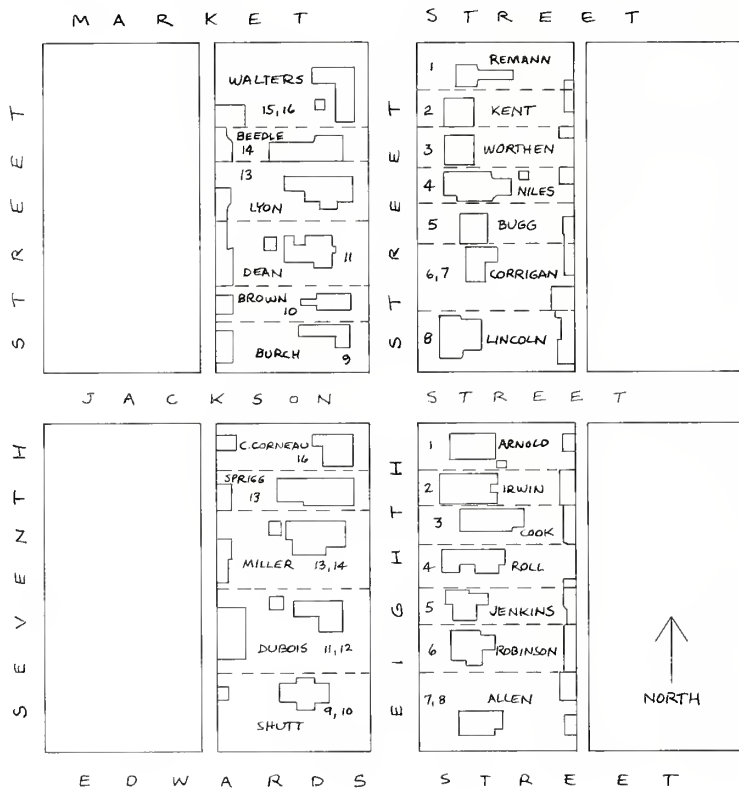
improvements in the Lincoln sites in recent years are far too numerous to catalogue here, but the most ambitious recent work deserves special notice.

The National Park Service, which administers the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, has embarked on a program to enhance the environment around the Lincoln home, pushing back the commercial blight which threatens so many of the nation's historic landmarks. The Lincoln home is not a brave little clapboard shrine bobbing on a sea of asphalt parking lots. It is not surrounded by tawdry curio-hawkers and phony museums which derive their only real element of authenticity from the genuine historic site they exploit and degrade. Visiting the Lincoln home consists of more than one briefly exhilarating encounter with an honest original preceded and followed by jarringly depressing confrontations with flim-



FIGURE 1. William Beedle house.

Courtesy National Park Service



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Map of Mr. Lincoln's neighborhood, adapted from the "Historical Base Map, 1860" drawn by the National Park Service.

flams and neon. It is, instead, a soothing, moving encounter with the environment of Abraham Lincoln's America.

Picket fences line the board sidewalks which lead the visitor through a four-block area the National Park Service describes as "Mr. Lincoln's neighborhood." At the rate of one house a year, the National Park Service has been restoring the homes around Lincoln's home to look, as nearly as possible, as they did in 1860. As always, the Park Service is willing to compromise with the inexorable ravages of time. Some homes are gone and probably cannot be replaced. Others cannot be reasonably restored to an 1860 state. In general, they will be more demanding of the buildings closest to the Lincoln home and allow more license in those further away. Near the Lincoln home, they may reconstruct a missing structure or two. All of the buildings will have information signs in front.

To date, the houses of William Beedle and George Shutt have undergone renovation. The Henson Robinson house is currently undergoing restoration (built in 1863, it is another of the Park Service's compromises). Others will follow in future years. Already, one feels more at ease in the area of the Lincoln home, and, when the project is completed, visitors will be able to stroll the streets of Lincoln's neighborhood much as he might have done himself.

Who were Lincoln's neighbors? George W. Shutt, who rented his home in 1860, was a young Democratic lawyer who spoke at a rally for Stephen A. Douglas in 1860. Members of the Shutt clan had been in Sangamon County for decades. Like many of Springfield's citizens, they had come from Virginia to Illinois via Kentucky. George's relationship with the other Shutt's is not clear, but he had married a Virginian, Mary Osburn, and shared Democratic political sympathies with the earlier Shutt pioneers in Sangamon County.

William H. Beedle was also a renter. He made his living as a fireman, but little else is known of this man who was not a long-time Springfield resident.

Henson Robinson, on the other hand, lived in Springfield for more than forty years. Born in Xenia, Ohio, in 1839, he came to

Springfield in 1858. A tinner by trade, Robinson entered a partnership with George Bauman in 1861 to sell stoves, furnaces, and tinware. Contracts for the manufacture of soldiers' mess plates and tin cups during the Civil War brought prosperity. A Methodist and a temperance man, Robinson was nevertheless a member of the Democratic party while Lincoln was still in Springfield. The Sixteenth President, of course, never saw Robinson's house, but its style is in keeping with the other restorations, and retaining the structure helps maintain the urban flavor of fairly dense settlement proper for the Lincoln neighborhood.

Sarah Cook, Robinson's neighbor on the present site, was a widow with six children. She rented her home from John A. Mason and took in roomers to help make ends meet. Mrs. Cook was born in 1809 in Warren, Ohio. She moved to Illinois with her husband Eli and settled in Springfield around 1840. He was a hatter. Her husband died in 1853, and for a brief time she operated a photographic studio in Springfield.

Charles Arnold's house is near Mrs. Cook's but located on the rear of the lot it occupied in 1860. Arnold lived in the house from 1850 to the 1870s. Born in Massachusetts in 1809, this transplanted Yankee, like most of his fellow New Englanders in Illinois, was a Whig. In 1840 he had been elected County Treasurer, and he was twice elected Sheriff of Sangamon County (1848 and 1852). Public office and Whig affiliation as well as physical proximity made Arnold an acquaintance of Lincoln's. He was married and (in 1850) had three children.

An even more prominent politician in Lincoln's neighborhood was Jesse Kilgore Dubois. He built the home across the street from the Henson Robinson house in 1858 and resided there for most of his neighbor's Presidency. Dubois was born in southeastern Illinois in 1811. He served with Lincoln in the state legislature, and their mutual devotion to the Whig party forged a fairly close friendship. He named his second child by his second

wife Lincoln. Dubois moved into the Republican party in 1856. Elected State Auditor that year, he moved to Springfield to assume his office. Reelected in 1860, Dubois had worked hard for Lincoln's election too, and he was to be sorely disappointed when he proved to have but little influence on the administration's appointments. Dubois was a loyal partisan but a man of narrow horizons who had hardly left his native state since birth. His request to have his son-in-law made Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Minnesota was opposed by the entire Minnesota congressional delegation, and Lincoln simply could not make the unprecedented move of appointing him in the face of such opposition. Bitterly disappointed, Dubois grumbled for years about Lincoln's treatment of him, but he did work for the President's reelection in 1864. He played a prominent role in Lincoln's funeral and was an active member of the National Lincoln Monument Association. Adelia Morris Dubois, Jesse's second wife, and Dubois himself remained friends of Mrs. Lincoln's throughout her unhappy widowhood.

Allen Miller, whose house is now next to Dubois's on the north, was a Sangamon County native (born in 1828). He and his wife Clarissa had seven children. He built his home around 1855. Miller dealt in leather goods, stoves, and tinware.

Julia Sprigg occupied the next house to the north. She was a widow, and her husband, Maryland native John C. Sprigg, had been a bank clerk. They had six children. Mrs. Sprigg herself had been born in Germany in 1815. Mr. Sprigg died in 1852, and Mrs. Sprigg moved to the house near the Lincolns in 1853. She became a friend of Mrs. Lincoln's, and her daughter often acted as babysitter for Tad and Willie Lincoln.

Charles Corneau's house, moved to prevent demolition in 1962, now sits next to the Lincoln home. He lived in the house from 1855 until his death in June, 1860. Corneau was Lincoln's druggist. He had also been a Whig in politics. Charles Corneau was born in Pennsylvania in 1826.

Almost nothing is known about Frederick Dean, but we do

know something about Lincoln's other neighbor across the street, Henson Lyon, who rented his home from Lemuel Ide. Lyon was a farmer who had resided two and one-half miles from Springfield after leaving Kentucky for Sangamon County in 1834. The home is famous for a post-Civil War resident, Samuel Rosenwald, the father of philanthropist Julius Rosenwald.

Many of the houses that stood near the Lincoln home in 1860 are gone now. The National Park Service may reconstruct a few of these, but most will have to be known from plat maps and census data, not from pleasant strolls through a tree-shaded historic site. In hopes of making this article a useful tool for the researcher, these now-phantom residents will be described in the following paragraphs. Those readers interested in this article primarily as a guide to the reconstructed Lincoln Home National Historic Site might want to turn to the last page for the concluding paragraphs on the site.

Moving northward from the Lincoln home, one finds the home sites of Henry Corrigan, Edward Bugg, Lotus Niles, Amos Worthen, Jesse Kent, and Mary Remann. Corrigan, born in Ireland in 1810, was retired by 1860. He was a good deal better off than his neighbor to the south, Abraham Lincoln. Corrigan valued his real estate at \$30,000. Bugg was a teamster. Born in England in 1812, he married a Virginian and had one son. He valued his real estate at \$4,000 in 1860, up from \$410 a decade before. By 1870 Bugg was a clerk. He seems to have been an ambitious and modestly successful man.

Lotus Niles, born in 1820, listed his occupation as "secretary" in the 1860 census. Whatever his precise duties,

they seem to have been remunerative, for he valued his real estate at \$7,000 and his personal property at \$2,500. Moreover, two female servants occupied his home along with his wife and three children. Amos Worthen was the State Geologist (he valued his real estate at \$5,000 in 1860). Jesse H. Kent was born in Ohio in 1812. A carriage-maker by trade, Kent valued his real estate at \$3,000 in 1860, up from \$350 in 1850, when he had listed his trade as "plough stocker." Kent had been a steady Whig in politics. The last house on Lincoln's block was Mary Remann's boarding house. A widow, Mrs. Remann had three children and rented rooms to John and Alexander Black.

Across Jackson Street to the south were the homes of Jared P. Irwin, John E. Roll, Jameson Jenkins, and Solomon Allen. Irwin had lived in Springfield briefly after 1837, when he laid bricks for the foundation of what is now the Old State Capitol. He returned to Pennsylvania, married, and moved back to Springfield in 1857. Irwin was an active Republican, an officer in Springfield's Lincoln Club in 1860. The Lincolns gave him as souvenirs some of their letters they were about to burn in preparation for their departure to Washington in 1861.

John E. Roll, born in New Jersey in 1814, had known Lincoln from the period of his earliest entry in Illinois. In 1831 Roll had helped Lincoln construct the flatboat he was to take to New Orleans for Denton Offutt. Roll moved to Springfield in 1831 and became a plasterer. He did well, valuing his real estate at \$4,750 in 1850, a figure well above that claimed by many of Lincoln's neighbors at that date. Eventually he became a contractor, building more than one hundred houses in Springfield. He was a steady Whig voter in the 1840s. The



Courtesy National Park Service

FIGURE 3. Julia Sprigg house.



Courtesy National Park Service

FIGURE 4. Allen Miller house.

Lincolns left their dog Fido with Roll when they departed for Washington in 1861.

Jameson Jenkins was born in North Carolina in 1810. He was married and had one daughter. Census takers noted the race of black and mulatto citizens, and the Jenkins family were listed as mulattoes. Mr. Jenkins was a drayman and drove Lincoln to the depot for his departure to Washington. His daughter married the son of Lincoln's barber William Florville. Solomon Allen, born in 1788, was a veteran of the War of 1812. He was a gunsmith. His barn still survives, but his house was demolished in the 1890s.

Across the street from the Lincolns lived William S. Burch, Ira Brown, and Ann J. Walters. Burch, born in 1814, was a clerk in a retail store (he valued his real estate at \$2,000 in 1860). Little is known about Ira Brown, Jr., or the widow Ann J. Walters, who had four children and valued her real estate at \$6,000 in 1860.

One of Abraham Lincoln's most notable qualities was his ability to transcend his environment. He was a common man, yet uncommon. His immediate environment is, nevertheless, always worthy of scrutiny. No one is completely exempt from the impress of his environment. Lincoln's neighborhood, it seems, contained both the expected and the unexpected. Many of its residents were substantial middling citizens who had steadily improved their economic lot. Men who had supported the Whig party predominated in the immediate neighborhood, just as they did in Springfield and Sangamon County as a whole. One might have expected the neighborhood to be more homogeneous in ethnic makeup, however. Persons born in Germany, England, and Ireland

were Lincoln's neighbors. So were mulattoes. Springfield may well have exposed Lincoln to a more complex variety of experiences than has been previously thought.

One suspects that more Americans learn history from historic sites than from books and lectures—especially after their years of formal schooling are over. Developing historic sites as the National Park Service now does is more than a matter of insulating the surviving reminders of this country's hallowed past from visual blight and from commercial exploitation heedless of authenticity. By enriching the memorials and monuments with the insights of the new social history, the National Park Service communicates an understanding of history that truly updates what the casual visitor may have learned in high school or college. All Lincoln students should acknowledge the distinguished role the National Park Service plays in keeping Americans abreast of the developments in the historical field which might otherwise remain the exclusive property of a handful of professional historians and devoted buffs.

It would be a mistake to end here and to underestimate the sheer pleasure involved in all this. No one who would take the trouble to visit the Lincoln sites in Springfield could fail to be impressed with the experience. If you have a chance, go there and see for yourself. If the timing is right, walk over to the Lincoln home around sundown. Tread the board sidewalks in relative solitude after the roar of the traffic on the busy street behind the home has subsided. Look at Lincoln's neighborhood in the twilight. You will likely remember the walk for the rest of your life.

BRAND NEW ONE ABOUT LINCOLN.

Story of the Democratic Rooster Metamorphosed Into a Whig 'Coon.

THE NEWS BUREAU.
Postal Telegraph Building,
WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 14.

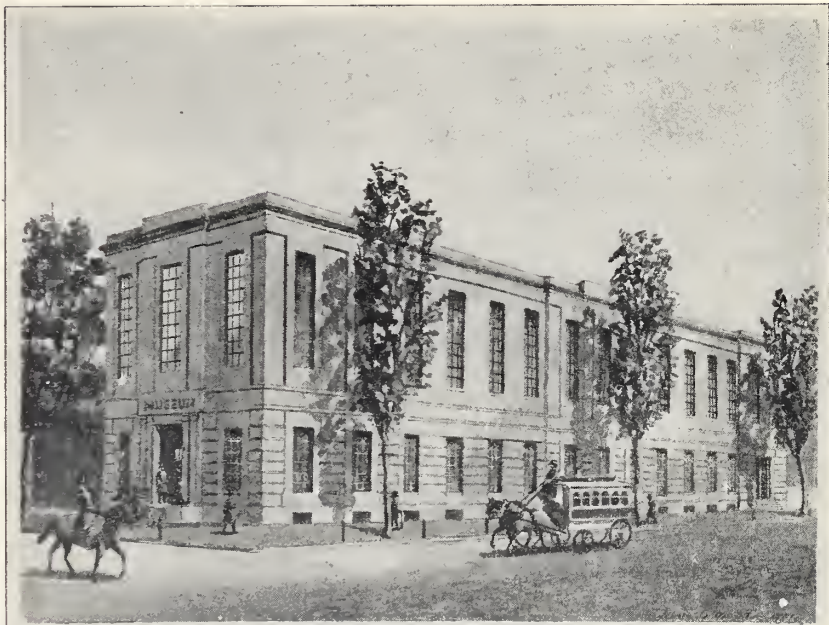
The recurrence of the anniversary of the birth of President Lincoln has called forth a large number of stories about him. Here is one both true and new, and it shows Mr. Lincoln's fondness for a joke.

The rooster was first adopted as a party emblem by the Democrats of Indiana. Hickory poles were also peculiarly Democratic, and in the great campaign of 1844 between Clay and Polk, every town and settlement in Indiana hid its hickory flag pole, and roosters were carried in every procession.

In a town of Southwestern Indiana, the Democrats erected a very fine pole, and on its top placed a box containing a live rooster. By pulling a cord the box would open and the rooster come out. Following nature, when the bird would come out into the sunlight from his close and dark quarters, he would flop his wings and crow lustily. This always aroused the Democrats to the liveliest enthusiasm. All Democratic speeches were made from a platform at the foot of the pole, and at the proper place in the speech the cord would be loosed and the crowing would follow.

The raccoon had been the Whig emblem ever since the log cabin campaign of 1840. One night Mr. Lincoln happened to be staying over at the Indiana town, and was told the story of the rooster and how he always brought shouts from the Democrats. Mr. Lincoln took some of the most daring and discreet Whigs into consultation. The next day there was to be a grand Democratic rally and it was expected the rooster would play a prominent part.

Sure enough, the Democrats had a grand rally, and they came into the village from every direction. The orator was very impassioned, soared to the clouds, and the time came for the proper and effective introduction of the rooster. The string was pulled, the trap fell, but, to the horror and rage of the Democrats, instead of a loudly crowing rooster, out came a 'coon, that had every appearance of having just concluded a feast on chicken. The joke came near precipitating a riot, and it was many years before the real perpetrators of the joke were known, and then it was divulged that Mr. Lincoln had suggested the substitution of the 'coon for the rooster.



THE CHINESE MUSEUM
North East Corner of 9th and Sanson Streets

Dr Louis H Warren
Lincoln Nat. Foundation
Fort Wayne Ind.

Dear Dr I am sending this picture
of the Chinese Museum which has a
-description attached — I have always
understood that Lincoln's first visit to
Philadelphia was as a delegate to the
Whig Convention held in this building —
at that time from this description
the Continental Hotel was not built — So

he could not have stayed there on this
visit — I know he stayed at the Continental
= at Hotel on one of his visits so I guess it
was a later visit when he raised the flag
on Independence Hall — in 1860 —

For years I have sent out as a Christmas
card, pictures similar to this to my friends
showing interesting old sites in Philadelphia
With best wishes to you

Henry B. McIntire

P.S.

I can send you a photograph of my painting
of the Continental Hotel if you wish it —

HBM —

THE CHINESE MUSEUM

Opened in 1838, as the Philadelphia Museum, a successor to Peale's Museum. The building had two stories, the second floor with high ceiling and balconies along the side and was capable of seating about 2000 people. The rear end of the first floor was a smaller room, with separate entrance from Sansom Street, called the "Lecture Room".

The principal exhibit at the time of the opening, was a collection of Chinese wax figures in costume showing every phase of Chinese life from the Emperor down to the humblest peasant. From that time on, the public called the building the Chinese Museum and it was so known thereafter.

The Chinese collection was removed in 1845 and after that time the building was put to various uses, and became the most popular place in the City for balls, banquets and public meetings. The Horticultural Society held its annual flower show in the hall and the Franklin Institute held several exhibits there.

The Whig Convention of 1848, nominated Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore for President and Vice President there.

The Central High School held its Summer commencement there in 1848 and 1849.

In 1854 a fire originated in the National Theatre on Chestnut Street, the back of which was but a few feet from the Chinese Museum. The fire spread until practically the entire block from 8th to 9th Street and Chestnut to Sansom Street was destroyed, including the Chinese Museum.

The lot remained vacant until 1857, when the Continental Hotel was built on the site. In 1925 it was replaced by the Benjamin Franklin Hotel.

Whig Convention of 1839
your Sutherland church
Harrisburg Penn
Tablet on church

Internal Improvement

The System of Internal Improvement -- was commenced under the administration of James Monroe; commenced with his sanction; commenced at his earnest recommendation. And if in after-ages, every leaf, in the chapter of his memoirs, shall be examined by the scrutinizing eye of grateful memory, to find, in the perennial green of all, one of more unfading verdure than the rest, that leaf shall ~~fold~~ unfold itself from the stem of Internal Improvement.

An Eulogy on James Monroe
by John Quincy Adams
August 25, 1831 at Boston

The young Indians

A club organized by Alexander Storer among
Army members of Congress called themselves the

Young Indians

Seven in number

Stephens and Loomis of Georgia

Ballard Preston, Flournoy, Pendleton of Virginia
Smith of Illinois

Mcman Smith of Connecticut.

See History of the War of 1812
Page 158

It will be seen By this, ~~summarize~~
had the transition to Executive Power ^{was a party doctrine} ~~for~~.

Lincoln's view ~~from at least~~ was an
affirmation of one of the basic principles
of the Whig party, and the Whig element
which ~~contributed to the~~ so largely
~~largely to the formation of the~~
to the forming of the Republican Party
might be said

Pamphlet - Aug P

" a pamphlet has been slipped into his
Mr. Funder's hand by the way of the report of
the post master General. (Both?)

first column had way down

Aug 10 1845

Jan 5 1846

Yonover belonged to the American
Party, etc.

Yonover's letter

Miss

DRAWER 9

WHIG LEADER

MISS

